

LIFE IN THE NURSERY SCHOOL  
AND IN EARLY BABYHOOD

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*Confident and secure in Mother's love,  
the keynote of harmonious development*



# LIFE IN THE NURSERY SCHOOL AND IN EARLY BABYHOOD

*by*

LILLIAN DE LISSA

Late Principal of Gipsy Hill Training College, 1917-46 ;  
Chairman of Nursery School Association of Great Britain  
1929-38

*With illustrations*

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*Design for the dust jacket and end-papers by Aliss M. D. Neilson*

## FOREWORD TO NEW EDITION

THIS book is intended to help young mothers, teachers and students to understand the growing child and his problems. It aspires to be a guide to their work, of fostering development and helping each child to educate himself as he spontaneously tries to do. Each chapter, and in fact the book as a whole, should be treated as merely an introduction to the wider study the reader should pursue for herself.

The new edition (revised and enlarged) includes chapters on psychological development during the first two years of life by Miss Ruth Thomas, and on education for the five- to seven-year-olds. There is also a chapter on the Assessment of Intelligence by Miss Norah Gibbs and many additional illustrations.

Though the book deals in the main with children between the ages of two and five years the new chapter on the first two years of life should be of special interest and help to young mothers.

Many people have assisted directly and indirectly in the preparation of this book, and it would be impossible to name all who have stimulated me in my work for young children, extending now over forty years. I remember with affection and gratitude Frances Newton, Principal of my training college in Sydney, and Lucy Spence Morice, M.B.E., friend and counsellor, when I was organizing pre-school education in Adelaide between 1905 and 1917.

I also wish to record my indebtedness to Miss Belle Rennie, who founded Gipsy Hill Training College in 1917 and its Nursery School "The Rommany" in 1919. As Principal of the College I had a unique opportunity for continuing my study of early education and experiment in the training of teachers for it—an opportunity for

which I am deeply grateful to Miss Rennie and without which this book could not have been written.

My thanks are due to the many superintendents and teachers in English and foreign Nursery Schools who have given me facilities for observing their methods; to my colleagues at Gipsy Hill and to my fellow-workers in the Nursery School Association, more especially to Miss Grace Owen, O.B.E., M.Ed., to whose enthusiasm and understanding the movement owes so much. I should like to mention Phyllis Booth (Duncan), B.A.; Dora Cadman, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.; Gwen Chesters, B.A.; and Irene Bromhall Champemowne, B.Sc., who have helped directly in the preparation of some sections of this book, and to Dr. Hamilton Hogben for helpful suggestions on physical health.

Many old students and friends have supplied photographs some of which have been arranged into composite pictures by Paul Gillert who contributed the line drawings and the photographs facing pages 176 and 224. Thanks are also expressed to the Nursery School Association for the use of photographs supplied by Nancy Quayle and Norman Spurr; to W. O. Lester Smith, Director of Education for Manchester, to Leicester Education Committee, and to Miss N. Clarke for photographs taken in their schools.

I wish to thank the authors and publishers, including the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office, for permission to quote from their publications; Mr. John Cox, Director of Education for Bolton, for permitting the inclusion of drawings of equipment in use in Bolton Nursery School and classes.

Finally, I desire to express my very great indebtedness to the late Mrs. Roy Devereux for her help in reading the MS.

L. de L.

Old Cottage  
Leatherhead  
1948

## INTRODUCTION

FOR some years England will be absorbed in recovering from the ravages of war. In doing so and in repairing and replacing much that has been destroyed she will have the unique opportunity of planning anew, and of creating social, economic and industrial conditions that will make a better way of life possible for all. The need for this has long been recognized by many. War with its evacuations and bombing revealed, for all to see, the extent of the poverty, squalor and wretchedness prevalent in most cities and the inadequacy of the homes where our future citizens were brought up.

Although there has been improvement in social conditions over the years, progress had been unreasonably slow and there was need for speedy reconstruction in many directions. Designs for this were drawn up before the war ended which subsequent legislation will gradually convert into reality. The trend is towards establishing a more democratic social order, which will reduce the great inequalities between wealth and poverty, privilege and want, so that every family and every individual should be assured of a decent home and a degree of security against the fear of sickness, unemployment and want.

Social insurance on a wider scale and the various plans that have been adopted, will do much to remove those fears and to bring greater material comfort to those who have been the less privileged members of society. It must, however, be recognized that these measures are of themselves insufficient to raise human standards and to bring fullness of life to our citizens. Man does not live by bread alone. People must learn to use well the oppor-

tunities now provided for them and to contribute towards evolving a higher national standard. Thus education and social progress must always go hand in hand, because they are but two aspects of one process each reflecting and stimulating the other. The contribution men and women are able to make towards the enrichment of national and international life, depends on the nature of the education they have received and the outlook, wisdom and character it has developed in them. It was, therefore, a far-seeing policy that made an Education Act the first piece of post-war reconstructive legislation to pass through Parliament during one of the blackest periods of the war. It was also an act of faith that promised well for the future. In presenting his Bill, Mr. Butler described it as having been designed to give equality of educational opportunity to every child in the land, regardless of the social and economic status of its parents.

Of the many interesting and valuable features of the Act, it is only possible here to consider such aspects of it as relate to very young children. In this respect, it provides for some notable changes. The first is the introduction of milk and meals free to all children as a recognized part of their education. Herein lies great wisdom, and the harvest of better health and growth should be a rich one.<sup>1</sup> Another most welcome feature is in regard to nursery schools which are, in future, to be established in any district where they are called for. The age at which children are required by law to go to school will remain the same (five years of age), and there will be no compulsion to attend nursery schools. A child under five will, however, be provided with nursery education if his parents wish it and make their wish known to the local authority, which is now required to make "special provision for these young children where it is likely to

<sup>1</sup> The free-milk scheme began in 1946; free meals are to be granted as soon as the necessary equipment and accommodation can be provided.



be needed, by means of Nursery Schools, or where such schools are considered inexpedient by means of Nursery Classes."<sup>1</sup> These requirements mark a new stage in the history of nursery education in this country.

A backward glance over the ground that has been covered since steps were first taken to care for children of pre-school age will show how long and difficult the road has been. For a complete history of early education from Robert Owen onwards students are referred to *Infant and Nursery Schools*<sup>2</sup> which contains, in addition, a great deal of valuable matter on all aspects of Nursery Schools and early stages of development.

The free kindergartens were the forerunners of the Nursery Schools. The first one opened in 1873 by Sir William Mather in Salford, Manchester, was in reality the first nursery school. There under the skilled guidance of a Kindergarten teacher whom Sir William invited from Germany, the children spent their day in happy play and were provided with meals and the opportunity for rest and for baths. Few of the free kindergartens opened subsequently in London, Birmingham, Edinburgh and Glasgow made such complete provision, and except for mid-morning milk and biscuits, meals were rarely served. They were all maintained by voluntary bodies without any aid from public money and were for the most part carried on in unadapted houses not unlike those in which the children were living. Inadequate as these kindergartens were in many respects, they did a great work and undoubtedly paved the way for the nursery schools of to-day.

In 1908 school medical service was for the first time made general in England, though several districts had already instituted it before then. From the moment of

<sup>1</sup> *A Guide to the Educational System of England and Wales.* (H.M.S.O.)

<sup>2</sup> Report of Consultative Committee, 1933. (H.M.S.O.)

his appointment, Sir George Newman, the first officer, began a campaign for the better care of pre-school children which he pursued with increasing vigour until his retirement in 1936. Over and over again he drew attention to the wastage of life that was occurring through neglect of the young child, and stressed the fact that the majority of maladies from which school children suffered were the direct result of ignorance and lack of wise treatment before school days, and could be prevented. Examination of school entrants soon revealed how persistent and widespread these maladies were, and there is little doubt that Sir George Newman's annual reports<sup>1</sup> did much to convince people of the vital need of preventive care in the early years. Rachael and Margaret McMillan in their work at Bradford, Yorkshire, had played no small part in getting the school medical service established,<sup>2</sup> and in 1911 they opened a night camp in Deptford for girls over eight years of age, to which young children were admitted by day. This open-air camp was very much enlarged during the 1914-18 war for the children of munition workers and was given a government grant on a per capita basis. The children remained all day—7.30 until 5.30—and had all their meals, baths, sleep and general care. Thus there appeared a free kindergarten similar in many respects to the original one in Salford, but with three essential differences. The Deptford school was in receipt of public money for its maintenance; it was held in an open-air shelter; and medical inspection and very great attention to health were given a prominent place therein. This healthy daily regime, food and play, life out-of-doors, and regular supervision by doctors, made the Deptford School, under the inspiration of Margaret McMillan, much more valuable than the

<sup>1</sup> *The Health of the School Child.* (H.M.S.O.)

<sup>2</sup> See Margaret McMillan. *Prophet and Pioneer*, by Albert Mansbridge.

kindergartens of that day elsewhere, and struck a new note. When, on the termination of the war, a wave of idealism set people planning for the world that had, to quote an unfortunate slogan, been made safe for democracy—the children were the first thought in every person's mind, and "more Deptfords" were envisaged and demanded.

The Fisher Act passed at the end of the war made it possible for nursery schools to be established, aided by Treasury grants. This, their first appearance on the Statute Book, was a notable landmark in educational history. The relevant clause in the Act reads: "The powers of local education authorities for elementary education shall include power to make arrangements for supplying and aiding the supply of Nursery Schools (which term shall include Nursery Classes) for children over two and under five years of age or such later age as may be approved by the Board of Education."

This clause was warmly received and a beginning was made promptly in establishing nursery schools and also in the training of teachers to staff them. Voluntary bodies took the initiative in both opening schools and in providing the specialist teacher training.

The work that commenced so hopefully was, alas, soon brought to suffer under the many economy cuts in public expenditure and the general difficulties that characterized the post-war years. Nursery schools, which were not an integral part of the compulsory education services, were among the early casualties on which money was "saved". However, though progress was thus considerably slowed down, the valiant work and enthusiasm of the pioneers kept it alive and gradually succeeded in persuading administrators to act. The Nursery School Association came into existence as a voluntary organization of men and women who joined together to work for the cause that was recognized to be of inestimable value

to children and to the nation. By means of conferences and public meetings up and down the country, through printed matter distributed widely and deputations to the Board of Education and other official bodies, public opinion became more informed as to the importance of early care of children, and people in all walks of life began to press for the establishment of more Nursery Schools. In 1938, though there were only about a hundred schools in existence in receipt of public money—and a few private “middle class” ones—there were innumerable plans for others, and had not war broken out, 1939 would have witnessed the opening of a great many more schools in the poorer areas.

In addition to nursery schools there were a considerable number of nursery classes which some authorities preferred to detached schools. These were at first a poor and inadequate substitute for nursery schools and many of them were little more than baby rooms attached to infants' departments in which there were none of the characteristic features of the nursery school. They were conducted in indoor rooms not required by the main school, and were without their own playground, suitable indoor sanitation, meals, or medical inspection. However, standards were gradually raised and by 1938 there were, here and there, nursery departments in infant schools that compared favourably with the best nursery schools. In some of the good and well-equipped nursery “wings” as they were often called, the educational regime, conditions and amenities were in so great contrast with those existing in the infants' departments that Directors of Education and teachers began to think in terms of extending the way of life beyond the age of five so that children would experience no shock as they passed from one class to the next. The desirability of avoiding the break at five was continuously urged by the Nursery School Association and it had been

the subject of a minority report by Miss Hawtrey in the Consultative Committee report on Infant and Nursery Schools. The phrase in the Fisher Act "or such later age as may be approved by the Board of Education" gave the necessary loop-hole for experiments in organizing schools for children from two to seven plus years of age and, at long last, official recognition was given to the first nursery school to cover that age range. It was at Princeville, Bradford.

The hundred or so nursery schools existing in 1938 were not all provided by local education authorities. On the contrary, at least half of them were provided by voluntary bodies who were aided by public money as far as the maintenance of the schools was concerned, but who were required to provide the whole of the capital cost of establishing the schools. These voluntary schools did a great work and many were of exceptionally high standard, but it was increasingly believed that the responsibility of educating pre-school children, which was a national question, should be shouldered by local authorities as part of their educational provision. The need for changing the permissive nature of the clause in the Act and for making it obligatory on local authorities to provide for the children was increasingly demanded.

The Education Act of 1944 was a logical next step in the development of nursery education, and Mr. Butler, who was well informed of public opinion, planned the nursery clauses of the Bill to encourage both experiment and variety of provisions and to stimulate progressive action. It requires local authorities to open nursery schools and also, under certain conditions, to have an age range of two to seven plus in them.

In requiring local authorities to provide nursery schools in any district where they are required, the Act recognizes the proper function of this school which is designed to help normal children to grow normally and

well. The nursery school thus takes its place as the first step in our national system of education. That this is clearly the intention of the Act is emphasized in the official pamphlet published after its enactment.<sup>1</sup> It marks a welcome change of attitude. For years, the idea has prevailed that nursery schools were required only in slums or congested areas in order to safeguard children from bad social conditions, in particular from bad housing, and also from the ignorance or poverty of their parents, or from neglect caused by the mother going to work. They were thus a kind of charity, a remedial service, and were classified for administrative purposes as "Special Services." It was not surprising, therefore, that people were slow to appreciate the positive contribution that nursery schools could make to the nation's welfare and the general well-being of children from normal homes attending them. Nor was it easy to convince local authorities of the significance of these schools so long as Whitehall refused to sanction their establishment in districts not deemed "bad enough." The short-sightedness of this attitude is acknowledged in the pamphlet just quoted. "Originally, nursery schools were started as an antidote to unsatisfactory conditions: to provide a suitable environment with proper care and training for the little children whose home circumstances did not, and could not, provide them. These conditions still apply; indeed, the need for Nursery Schools will remain acute while the housing shortage exists and while young married women are required in industry or continue to seek employment."<sup>2</sup> The pamphlet continues: "Few people would now contend that Nursery Schools exist solely to make good deficiencies in the home and that they will cease to serve a purpose as new and better homes materialize and as parents are

<sup>1</sup> *The Nation's Schools*. (H.M.S.O.)

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, par. 12.

better able to look after their children. The values of good nursery training are of much wider application. Given a good home and all that these words connote, the young child may, no doubt, find in the home environment much of what he requires in early years. But few homes can provide all his needs . . . the Nursery School should be looked upon as an extension of the home and the relationship of the school to the home is a vital one."<sup>1</sup>

Defects in child nurture vary from home to home. In one case the defect may be limited to physical cleanliness and enough good food; in another, training in self-reliance may be lacking. In some homes, children are without the love and attention that give them confidence and security; in others, they are not taught to consider the claims of others. No one of these defects is confined to a particular area—not even the lack of physical nourishment. Some mothers are wise shoppers and good cooks, and succeed in nourishing their children well despite limited means. Others are less knowledgeable in these matters, and side by side in any district one may find children well or ill-nourished both physically and psychologically. In view of this, it becomes clear that the young child's health and general development cannot be left to chance in a well-planned society. Like other aspects of the nation's welfare, adequate provision must be designed. This necessity the Education Act recognizes.

The importance of early years, when growth is rapid, and the pattern of future living is designed for good or ill, is no new discovery. Throughout the ages the truth has been reiterated in many different forms, and to-day, as a result of both medical and psychological research carried on in different parts of the world, "science has confirmed the judgment of common sense," as Gesell puts it. The child is indeed father to the man. To-day

<sup>1</sup> *The Nation's Schools*, par. 13.

it is generally accepted that the foundation of health and intelligence and the pattern which the child follows in unfolding his personality are laid down in infancy. After an early age, growth is in the nature of an elaboration and modification of the original design to which it adheres in all essential features. It is not a succession of stages, but a continuous progression, like a river wherein what enters to enrich or pollute is carried onwards. The effects of malnutrition and infectious disease in early years are carried as scars on the bones from childhood till death. Those weakened by ill-health in childhood are rendered more susceptible to breakdown later. The effects of psychic malnutrition or mishandling are as serious, leading sometimes to unhappiness or neurosis, sometimes to delinquency and crime. On the other hand, helpful influences and robust health, established in early years, are of permanent value.

Despite the serious intention of the Act, unless there is constant vigilance and unless repeated representations are made to authorities, it may be a very long time before nursery education is provided extensively enough to meet existing needs. For many years to come, claims on local authorities are likely to be heavy in making adequate provision for primary and post-primary education. The requirements of pupils who have reached the compulsory age of schooling must be met and this difficult situation, complicated by the dearth of buildings and shortage of teachers, may become an excuse for doing less than is possible for the "under fives." It will not be easy to keep existing, or newly opened, nursery schools up to the standard required of them, chiefly by reason of the shortage of teachers trained specially for these schools, and the supply will probably have to be eked out by the appointment of women, who took the short Child Care Reserve Courses, and who rendered such splendid service during the war, in the emergency "War-Time Nurseries."



Now that it is possible to consider the legacy left by these war-time nurseries that solved so many problems in a time of need and kept children safe and happy, the mixed nature of the legacy is apparent. On the credit side, these nurseries and the propaganda waged on their behalf made the public "pre-school-child conscious" as never before. A less welcome consequence is the lowering of educational standards that they have brought about. These war-time nurseries were not nursery schools, and though every effort was made to keep them as efficient as possible, it is clear that women and girls who qualified for the war-time service by means of the short Child Care Reserve Courses could not be expected to have the same depth of understanding of children's development or the same educational technique as those who have spent years in study. It was not expected of them. The task entrusted to these people was well done—and to the best of their ability. These nurseries have now, in many cases, been "taken over" by the local authority to be made into nursery schools. The task involves restaffing with trained teachers, and providing that educative way of life that is an indispensable feature of the nursery schools. They must never become places in which children are merely "minded" in a kindly manner, kept safe and clean, and where they can have meals and sleep. Unfortunately, there are many people who do not realize the difference between these Emergency Nurseries and Nursery Schools! The task of raising and maintaining standards is a challenge to the educational world and to parents who must co-operate with the education authorities and teachers in seeing that the provisions of the 1944 Act are realized, and that children who attend nursery schools will therein receive the education that belongs to such schools.

The future depends to a large extent on teachers by whose efforts the possibilities of the recent Act can become

realities. In particular, it rests upon the younger members of the profession who are entering it at a time of new beginnings and who are themselves free from hampering traditions. Those qualifying in colleges or who are in the early years of teaching have a great contribution to make and one hopes that they will take up the work in the spirit of a crusade, prepared to equip themselves thoroughly and to give of their best in the building of a future which may have both national and international significance. They must take up the torch lit by the early pioneers, through whose devoted labour the nursery school movement came into existence and took root so firmly that it has now become absorbed in the national system of education. Inspired by them, these young people must build with vision and courage on the foundation already laid.

## CHAPTER I

### GROWTH

THE words "growth" and "development" though often used interchangeably do not really describe the same process. Growth is primarily concerned with increase in size, development with complexity of structure and function and to some extent with the change of proportion.

According to Gesell who has written in such an illuminating way about infancy, "Growth is the most significant term in the vocabulary of hygiene," having in some respects "a meaning more pregnant than the word health."<sup>1</sup> The chief business of the young child is to grow, and therefore this phenomenon is of prime importance to the teacher, who should know all that is possible about the process and the modifications it brings, and understand the child's own effort to develop his body and mind. Hers is a task of co-operation, for the function of education is to foster growth. She is called upon to protect and encourage it in every way so that children progress spontaneously and naturally towards the fullness of vigorous life.

Human growth is a miraculous and incomprehensible process during which a microscopic speck of protoplasm changes into a complex organism possessing diverse powers. The full-grown person, who may "take the wings of the morning and explore the uttermost parts of the sea," has a body that is "fearfully and wonderfully made"; a mind capable of thought and reason, of artistic creativity and scientific imagination, and a personality

<sup>1</sup> Gesell, *Guidance and Mental Growth in Infant and Child*. (Macmillan Co., N.Y.)

in which hopes and fears, love and hate, fear and fortitude are blended with the capacity to wonder, and to worship. All of this evolves in some inexplicable way from a single cell.

The original cell from which the individual grows contains all the potentialities of full development. No others can be added by education and training, opportunity or experience. The only help that can be given from without is in the direction of releasing and developing inherent potentialities. "It is believed by many people that rare talents and artistic gifts of mankind are not due to something added to the make-up of an ordinary man, but to the absence of factors that inhibit the development of these powers. According to Bateson they are to be looked on as a release of power normally suppressed."<sup>1</sup> The theory of evolution postulates a process of eliminating factors that inhibit development and regards all forms of life that at present inhabit the world, plants, insects, animals, man, as having evolved from the one first cell that implanted life on this planet. In this conception of the unity of all life, science and philosophy meet.

#### THE PATTERN OF GROWTH

The impulse towards growth and development is inherent in all living things which follow a definite and unvarying sequence peculiar to the species to which they belong. Just as in plant life flowering must precede and prepare for fruiting, so too in human life each phase is a preparation for the next. The whole process is a progressive revelation. There is frequently a preliminary stage of practising that takes place some time before the new power appears and that prepares the way for it, as, for example, the babbling that precedes speech.

The child grows as a unity in which body and mind are

<sup>1</sup>K. Glover and E. Dewey, *Children of the New Day*. (D. Appleton Century Co.).

interdependent. In early years the sequence of psychological development appears to be closely connected with bodily growth. Thus the young child's power of learning and acquiring skill is not absolute; for the activity of each stage is limited by physical structure and the extent of neuro-muscular co-ordination. This holds true throughout the growing years in which the child's impulsive action and natural interests are indicative of his learning ability. "These manifestations come from an inner compulsion and are primarily organized by inherited mechanism and by an intrinsic physiology of development. The very plasticity of growth requires that there be a limiting and regulating mechanism. Growth is a process so intricate, so sensitive, that there must be powerful stabilizing factors, intrinsic rather than extrinsic, that preserve the balance of the total pattern and the direction of the growth trend. Maturation is, in a sense, a name for this regulating mechanism."<sup>1</sup>

There appears to be an inner rhythm which, though it is affected by outward influences, sometimes accelerated sometimes retarded by them, is never really broken. The process of maturation goes on in spite of handicaps, for the nervous system "tends to grow in obedience to in-born determiners whether saddled with handicaps or favoured with opportunity."<sup>2</sup> For instance the baby does not learn to sit up. "He sits up when the neuro-muscular system has attained a certain degree of development."<sup>3</sup>

During the process of growth the child passes through sensitive periods, in which the learning in specific ways and the development of particular skills, necessary as a preparation for what is to follow, are easy. Special attention should be paid to these periods which are of importance in regard both to successful learning and to

<sup>1</sup> Gesell: *Guidance and Mental Growth in Infant and Child*.

<sup>2</sup> L. Wagoner: *The Development of Learning in Young Children*.

<sup>3</sup> L. Wagoner: *Op. cit.* (McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., Ltd.).

the conservation of vitality for the needs of natural growth. When children are provided with an outlet for the type of physical or psychological activity that synchronizes with the phase through which they are passing, there results a harmonious flowing of vitality, and growth proceeds normally. If, however, the child is denied the right outlet for the expression of interests and is required to learn things or to behave in ways that have no relation to his degree of neurological ripeness, the result is quite contrary. There is strain which may be harmful, and is always wasteful, and energy, instead of flowing in the way of nature's needs, is arrested or diffused. Thus growth is handicapped. To expect a child to adapt himself to ways of living beyond his developmental age, such as to sit still at four or to learn the three R's, is harmful and spendthrift of the child's time and energy. Premature achievement does not make for sound growth nor for permanent gain. It often produces an outward appearance of growth without the reality—like flowers stuck in the sand that make a brave show momentarily and then wither and die. Failure to give the right opportunity for the full use of powers as they emerge is equally wasteful and may cause an arrest in the growth of these powers, which are starved and stunted if not actually destroyed. The consequence of expecting a child to adapt himself unnaturally may be serious, for the damning back of any full flowing stream serves only to force the current in some other direction. Emotional inharmony, intellectual prejudices, physical strain, may then arise singly or together and produce incorrigibility, neurosis and dullness. Maturation and learning must always be related and the value to the teacher of the study of normal growth in normal children is that it enables her to plan both environment and education in a way that has a direct relationship to the developmental needs of her little ones.

Sensitive periods are not isolated stages, for growth is continuous and is not a successive appearance of unrelated powers or functions. The many phases through which a child passes in his development are so very close-knit that it is not possible to say at what moment any power begins to function. "There is no break anywhere, no plateau, no steep ascent, no sudden change of direction."<sup>1</sup> The sensitive periods might be likened to the swelling of leaf buds on a growing shrub. These buds which begin to form long before they are apparent, swell up by reason of the concentration of the "life force" that is circulating through the plant. Though each new bud is momentarily an outstanding feature, as others open it is brought into harmony with the whole plant and takes its place as one of many.

From time to time a power which has been developing slowly in the child may become very active and, as it were, the centre of his psychic life. It develops with great rapidity, and then gives place to some other power or interest that appears in a similar way. Psychological growth proceeds unevenly and its various aspects pass through springing-up periods and times of quiescence. Thus, psychologically as well as physically there is constantly a change of proportion. Yet throughout these changes the child remains a unity, for his personality binds together in a living whole all the different phases and aspects of the physical and psychological life, and all potentialities whether nascent or active.

To speak of "stages of growth," such as the sensory stage, the stage of reasoning, the emotional stage, the age of fantasy is apt to be misleading, suggesting as it does the sudden appearance of new and isolated powers, whereas all is continuous. The child is sensorially active long before he reaches the age at which this type of behaviour is insistent, and he continues to use his senses until he

<sup>1</sup> Ballard: *The Psychological Aspect of the Break at 11*.

dies. Long before the child is capable of verbal reasoning he shows, by the way he uses his toys, that he can reason logically, and logical thought develops in power with maturity. Emotional reactions are among the first to be seen in babyhood. These reactions do not fade out after the period of emotional intensity that comes at about three, but experience another period of intensity at puberty and are characteristic of man until death. Growth is a deepening and extending of power which is present potentially, if not actively from the beginning of life—and persists till its end. The sensitive periods are moments at which the speed of development is temporarily accelerated—and they become, in consequence, times at which the child is specially ripe for learning or developing skill in that particular direction. They are thus of extreme importance in education, which should be in a sense a science of timing opportunity with ripeness. Because of the unity of the personality and the unbroken continuity of growth, the adult should, like Janus, look forward and back, always endeavouring to envisage the whole life of the child even though touching only one moment of it. Influences for good or ill that occur at any stage reverberate to the end, whether they be physical or psychological.

Though every child's development follows the same path and passes the same landmarks, there are strong individual differences in the growth of each one, brought about by inherent characteristics and tendencies and by the contribution of each child's personality.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF INHERITANCE

By means of small particles in the germ cell called "genes," the characteristics of one generation are passed on to the next, and another link is forged in the chain of life. "Growth," says Gesell, "organically ties the present with the past and directs it to the future."



There is always a tendency for growth to follow a pattern, pre-determined by the nature of inheritance. Children "take after" parents or other relations. They inherit tendencies and pre-dispositions that influence appearance, character and intelligence, though they do not necessarily control them. An animal is bound by his inheritance, but a human being is able to triumph over weakness and to convert it into a source of power. By reason of inherited tendencies growth in certain directions is sometimes so strong that high attainments are reached ; sometimes so weak that the result is mediocrity or even defectiveness. Because of the strength of inheritance, there is a growing belief in many countries in eugenic training of men and women, and the advisability of some degree of national control over parenthood. The suggestion has been made that men and women intending marriage should be encouraged to obtain a clean bill of health before doing so. In some countries the production of such a certificate is required before a licence to marry can be obtained.

### THE SELF

In addition to inherited tendencies, there is something essentially individual in every child—a self, a spirit, an ego—difficult to name and impossible to understand, something that acts as a guide and control in the development of each person. Inheritance and environment, opportunity and experience, are materials that the self uses in the building of the body and mind through which it functions. Human development is essentially an individual affair. It is more than a mechanical addition of faculties or of inherited powers, nor is it merely a matter of chemical reaction. Each has within him the power of creating himself, of making himself something unique and different from every other person. Early in life every child sub-consciously designs the pattern of his individual psychological growth and to this he adheres, though

possibly with modification, throughout life. There are psychologists who maintain that even the form and appearance of the body as well as its maintenance in good health or otherwise are produced by the self for its own purpose. It is not possible to generalize about the "child" as though he were an abstraction, nor about "environment" as though it were something static and final, for environment though the same materially, is different for every person.

No two people react in the same way to the same stimuli, nor are they sensitive to the same influences. It is only the inner guiding self in each that can determine what elements in the environment are selected, and how they are used. It is always an inner choice, and can never be a matter of outer compulsion. Consequently it is very important to leave a child free from outward pressure that might in any way prevent his obeying this inner creative energy. When inner impulses and external demands clash—as they must where adult guidance is unformed—the conflict that is produced within the child causes disharmony and often ill-health. In modern education the principle of leaving children free to educate themselves, and encouraging them to be spontaneous and natural, is now generally accepted. In practice it is constantly violated, because belief in the divine rightness of adults dies hard! Sub-consciously there is always a fear that the child will not develop satisfactorily nor learn well unless he is actually being taught and directed. The child is habitually treated as though he were "an empty being which the adult must fill by his endeavours, or an inert or incapable being for whom everything must be done because he is without inner guide."<sup>1</sup>

There is only one way to uproot this attitude and that is through knowledge of children gained by first-hand study of them and an understanding of the laws of human development as they have been studied and recorded by others.

<sup>1</sup> Montessori: *The Secret of Childhood*. (Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd.)

Once adults are convinced of the infallibility of nature's laws, and recognize that nothing happens by chance and that all is governed by law, they will accept the fact that it is as natural for the human being to develop intelligence and character, as it is for him to have teeth or hair, or to assume an upright position. Because it is natural, nature has implanted the impulse towards development in each person. The adult can help only by supplying the conditions favourable to all-round growth and by endeavouring to serve life in this way, the teacher will become more humble in her attitude towards the child and more ready to learn from him.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF ENVIRONMENT

Environment plays an important part in the lives of all things; it is in a sense half of life, for without it there can be no growth nor could life itself be sustained. The plant, for instance, has within itself the potentialities for following the full cycle of life, through flower and back to seed. But without the environmental influence of soil, rain, sun, wind and insects to fertilize it, there could be no development. There is a relationship between the form and function of most creatures and the environment in which they live. The human being is no exception. During growing years he is dependent on nurture from without for the development of his powers of body and mind. Without suitable food, fresh air and sunshine, the body does not grow well; without experience of a suitable kind intelligence is retarded, and without human love and the sense of safety and protection it gives, emotional development cannot be satisfactory. Nature and nurture must be ever closely associated for they can accomplish co-operatively what neither can produce alone. For instance, nature endeavours to give the human being good teeth and these begin to form between the eighteenth and twenty-first day of pregnancy. If

however, the nourishment that comes to the growing body is lacking in bone-forming substance in either pre-natal or neo-natal days, the teeth either do not form properly, or develop unhealthily, and when erupted are sometimes already in a state of decay. The same law operates in psychological growth. The impulse to speak, for instance, appears naturally in every healthy, growing child. There is a kind of pre-speech activity common to all children the world over, who coo, crow and practise all the various sounds and combination of sounds that are later used in language, whatever the environment. Though the impulse arises spontaneously and strongly, there are children who do not learn to speak, and others who succeed in acquiring very indifferent powers of speech. The former are the deaf children who, because they do not hear their own babbling nor the speech of adults, receive no help from without. Thus the impulse dies and they become dumb unless taught to speak artificially. The child who acquires indifferent speech is, as a rule, one whose social or cultural environment is unsatisfactory or who is not talked to. The child who hears normally, who lives with cultured, friendly people, learns to speak naturally and fluently. Though the pre-speech sounds of all children are similar, each converts these sounds into the language of his country as a result of environmental influence.

#### VARIATIONS IN THE RATE OF GROWTH

The rate of growth varies during life. It is most rapid at the beginning, and though there are several periods at which it is accelerated, it is never as rapid as during the first year of life. The rate before birth is amazing, for in the short space of nine months a minute microscopic cell develops into a human child, weighing about seven pounds, and perfect in organs and functions. It is fortunate that this rate of growth is not

maintained. "If he continued to grow at this rate after birth he would weigh 200 lbs. at the end of the first year, and at the age of twenty would be as big as the earth."<sup>1</sup>

In subsequent years there are periods of rapid growth, both physically and psychologically, and others of relative quiescence, each significant of the need of special opportunity and protection. During quiescence, growth, though slowed down persists often out of sight, and it sometimes appears as if interest and power had ceased to be active. If the child is not pressed forward at this time but is permitted to give his vitality to other impulses seeking an outlet, in due course the power which had apparently ceased to function will probably re-appear and in a more mature form. The slowed-down period is frequently the time for root formation without which no growth can be permanent or secure. This ebb and flow, or fast and slow pace, is characteristic of both individual powers of intelligence and character, and of the psychic life as a whole. It varies in different children. There are some who keep a fairly even rhythm—others who show marked alteration and change of pace. Every child has his own rhythm of development which should not be disturbed. It is unfortunately often destroyed when children are required in school to maintain the same standards and acquire similar skill to others of their age.

Perhaps the most significant factor of growth is the way in which it produces, not only increase in size, but also change of proportion. Life begins in a cell from the multiplication of which the complex human body is formed. Important parts grow first and the head of the new-born child is proportionately very large. Were it to keep this proportion into adulthood it would extend halfway down the chest. The legs of the new-born are very short compared with the size of the body. All these pro-

<sup>1</sup> Montessori: *Pedagogical Anthropology*. (William Heinemann, Ltd.)

portions alter during growth, and the beauty of form of the well-developed adult is brought about by a very considerable change in the proportions of head, limbs and trunk. In psychological growth too, there are constant changes in proportion as different sorts of skills become active and for a time monopolize much of the child's vitality. There are times when physical activity predominates, others when emotional impulses are almost overpowering. Gradually, if growth is good, as all powers grow stronger, there comes about a harmonious balance and the individual acquires poise and serenity.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EARLY YEARS

"For perspective we must grant that the pre-school period exceeds all other epochs in developmental importance. It occupies the first seventy months of the scriptural allotted seventy years, only one hour reckoning the entire span of human life as a day. But during that hour the major portion of the total stream of development flows under the bridge."<sup>1</sup>

Early childhood is a time of the greatest susceptibility to influence and environmental conditions. The danger of diseases is considerable though an equal opportunity exists for laying the foundation of good health. Sir George Newman says of this period in the last report he published in 1933, "Let us make clear, precise and definite these facts, (1) that the child under five stands at the gate of our whole educational system, (2) that the child is the seed-plot of everything medical, physical, mental and moral, (3) that what happens to the child before it is five is bound inevitably to have results for good or evil—and finally that the child is not yet being effectively provided for." Writing of the pre-school period of human development Gesell says it is the most consequential period, for the simple and decisive

<sup>1</sup> Gesell: *Mental Growth of the Pre-School Child*. (Macmillan Co., N.Y.)

reason that it comes first and because the earliest periods of development are always times of most intense and fundamental growth. "Never again will the child's mind, character and spirit advance so rapidly as in the formative pre-school period. Never again will he have equal chance to lay the foundation of mental health. From the point of view of mental hygiene the pre-school period therefore appears to have no less significance than it has for physical vigour and survival."<sup>1</sup>

Though growth is rapid in children, the human child differs from all other mammals by the longer span of childhood and longer period of adolescence. Man does not come to maturity until twenty-five years old or later. As civilization progresses the period of childhood is prolonged. It is no exaggeration to say that the nature of the protective care given to the growing child, the length of schooling and of recognized childhood are indications of the cultural standard of a nation.

<sup>1</sup> Gesell : *Mental Growth of the Pre-School Child*.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CHILD UNDER TWO YEARS

THIS book deals primarily with children of nursery school age and although reference is made in most chapters to the baby, chief consideration is given to growth and education that take place between babyhood and school life. No study of children or their education can, however, be truly informed that does not include some understanding of the first two years of life and the miraculous and fascinating development that then takes place. During that short period the new-born infant, helpless and largely unaware of his surroundings, changes into an alert, active two-year-old, eager for independence and to investigate everything within reach. The development that takes place at this formative age and the nature of the care and training given to the baby are not only of importance during infancy itself but also exercise a profound influence on subsequent development. The student should, therefore, seek as much knowledge as possible on this important period and all that characterizes it. By gaining some insight into modern baby-care in which training is so carefully timed with the child's readiness or "ripeness" to learn, she will gain both understanding and conviction as to the soundness of this principle as applied to education over two, and in fact throughout the growing years. Knowledge of the child's earlier life and its problems should also make her more capable of understanding the children she teaches, and in particular those who are maladjusted and difficult.

A comprehensive study of the child under two cannot be given in the short space here available, and students are advised to read more widely on the subject.



## SECTION I. THE PRIMITIVE ORGANIC LIFE

## CHILD SERVICES

Public services to care for the young child and his mother have reached an astonishingly high level in this country of late years. It is impossible to take proper account of the welfare of young babies without also taking account of the ante-natal and post-natal welfare of the mothers, so closely do the health and happiness of both go hand in hand. In all urban areas in England there is a network of maternity and child welfare centres, with ante-natal departments to advise and help mothers before confinement. Here also mothers can be examined post-natally and advice and help are given on the care of children under five years. All mothers do not yet use these centres though they are urged to do so by the health visitor, a specially skilled child nurse who is obliged by law to see every new-born baby and its mother in her area, at least once.

Nor are these services yet numerous enough to cater for the needs of our widespread rural areas. Here they are still far from adequate even when supplemented by the post-natal work of the district nurse who covers an incredible amount of ground by bicycle or in a small car.

The health visitor finds it quite impossible to separate the mother's need for advice on physical care from her need for advice both for the child and for herself on matters which affect the mental welfare of both. As her training affords her practically no psychological preparation for this work, she is bound to fall back on the natural wisdom of a wide experience, and a sympathetic outlook, but both she and the medical profession to which she belongs are slowly coming to realize that the psychological interrelatedness of mother and child is an extremely complex problem. So far only very few boroughs supply

skilled psychological advice at the weekly clinics of which mothers can avail themselves. It is hoped that the future will see not only a great extension of such services, but that health visitors will be better equipped in this way by their initial training and by an extension of their knowledge through post-graduate courses. So far, these courses have been confined to the big cities.

Everyone realizes that the most important bond between a mother and her child arises because the mother has had the biological experience of bearing the child and because before birth and indeed for some time afterwards the mother and the child are one inseparable entity—this is true both as the mother sees the matter and as the child feels it. Still in no uncertain sense motherhood is a profession for which training is as essential as in any other. In a recent circular<sup>1</sup> on training in homecraft, the Ministry of Education has taken some steps to ensure that the beginnings of training for those who are interested to study parenthood shall be set up over as wide an area as possible in technical and evening institutes, women's guilds, and as part of a normal secondary education. Young people at school can undoubtedly learn much that is useful about parenthood though in this as in all other forms of education "ripeness is all." This knowledge will mean most to those who are really at an age to be married or are actually thinking of doing so, or are in fact married. Only when parenthood is a less remote and academic possibility do the feeling relationships which bind parents and child into a family come to take on new and adult meaning for young people. They need the driving force of their own sexual and parental wishes to help them to make that volte-face in outlook which is necessary when one has looked at the family for many years from the standpoint of the child and now requires to look at it

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education 117. (H.M.S.O.)

from the standpoint of the parent. Before this time it is possible to absorb some technical knowledge which can rightly be called *parentcraft* but scarcely those essential attitudes with which the "craft" must be infused.

A major revolution in outlook is involved when the young person ceases to see himself or herself as dependent or semi-dependent inside or outside the family, and accepts the willing responsibility of being instead the creature depended on. It is less difficult to take the step into parenthood than to achieve the attitudes which will enrich it and make it least burdensome.

The kind of start a baby gets in life is not only a question of its parents' preparedness. It is also a question of the preparation which society makes for its reception. Harassed families liable to unemployment, tenement houses where mothers with prams must live on the top floor, gardenless houses and suburbs, establishments without proper laundry and drying facilities may do less than we imagine to decrease the actual birthrate, but they do an infinity of harm in raising the tension of family life, a tension which of necessity has severest effects on children under five; and within that group worst on the baby between one and two and a half. It must be remembered that the problem in England is aggravated by our variable climate and secondly that these problems have been met in other countries. One recalls the nurseries where children under two could be left on an occasion for a few hours when the mother might shop or clean or even go to the pictures, and the corporation "nappy" service for mothers, both part of the remarkable short achievement of socialist Vienna. A commercial venture in a north of England town provides a cheap and effective nappy service in that area as is fairly general in U.S.A. A recent combined circular issued by the Ministries of Health and Education has authorized the provision of short-time care of children under two in crèches attached to

Infant Welfare Centres. It will be a big step forward when local authorities implement this "paper" provision.

### THE FIRST MONTHS OF LIFE

It is usual for a new baby to cry after birth, often till it has been bathed, wrapped fairly firmly in a warm covering and put down to sleep. The crying serves biological purposes but on the baby's part it is certainly a protest at emerging from an optimum state of total dependence into a highly stimulating world in rather a summary fashion. It is now recognized that birth itself is a shock to a baby, greater or less according as the passage through the birth canal may have taken a long or short time, and he usually spends several hours in recuperative sleep afterwards.

For practically the first month of his life he is inclined to draw away from all undue stimulations though he is quickly accustomed to the level of light and sound around him if they are not excessive. In his careful comparative observation of babies<sup>1</sup> Arnold Gesell notes the less intense visual regard and the economy of random movements of head and body which characterize the baby of one month in contrast with the baby of two. Similar tests for normalcy in the baby under a month arranged by Charlotte Bühler<sup>2</sup> include several tests of slight bodily stimulation from which the baby withdraws. Conditions which have something in common with the pressures and tensions of his ante-natal life are the most pleasing—being firmly held or tucked in his basket, or suspended in his bath. Dressing and undressing are particularly disliked. For this reason, babies' clothes are designed not to be pulled on over the head but laid on and tied or buttoned from neck to foot; the new-born

<sup>1</sup> *Infancy and Human Growth*. (Macmillan, New York, 1928.)

<sup>2</sup> *Testing Children's Development*. (Allen and Unwin, 1935.)

baby with an understanding midwife is seldom actually dressed for the first day or two.

Far from showing great interest in his varied new life at first the new baby withdraws as much as possible from it, sleeping almost twenty-one hours daily for the first two months, roughly twenty hours for the next two months, and as much as nineteen hours from four to six months. In the next six months the sleep period gradually reduces itself to fourteen or sixteen hours and by one and a half years few young children sleep more than twelve or thirteen hours. If the positive side of the child's life goes well, this negative withdrawn life of the child enables the mother to recuperate after pregnancy and to get to know her baby in slow stages. In a normally developing child it is quite definitely the easiest part of upbringing.

Where then is the baby's interest in these first few months? The most protesting reactions of a new baby are to discomfort, cold, noise, loss of support, pain and hunger. Though as yet he can know very little about the human persons who look after him he shows undoubted anticipation of relief when they respond to his cries. A hand laid on him, the sound of a voice, or just being picked up will temporarily soothe. More often than not the cry recommences if relief is not immediate, but the temporary reassurance would seem to show that from the very onset of life the child connects human pressure and and sound and warmth with pleasure and the relief of distress. For this reason it is so unfortunate that little provision is made in hospitals and nursing homes for mother and baby to be together. Exiled to the baby room new babies do not find their distress signals answered immediately; the only defence against trouble with which they come into the world proves in these circumstances ineffective. The biological and psychological purpose of the cry is defeated by such arrangements. The mother on the other hand loses precious time

in which getting to know her baby would be comparatively easy.<sup>1</sup> A few modern American hospitals now make use of a cot with padded collapsible sides on a level with the mother's bed, so that it is possible for the two to come together whenever the mother wishes it, and at the same time for the comfort and security of both to be preserved.

The voice and the pressure to which the baby reacts for a moment are not of course the real comfort he is demanding. This is something much more undifferentiated, diffuse, and organic which seems to be achieved only in two situations, warm physical contact with the mother's body and opportunity to feed from her. In her tests for the first month of life Charlotte Bühler notes that when the child's cheek is lightly touched with the finger, he at once begins lip and sucking movements. Gesell counts it a sign of development between three and four months that the three-months baby will open his mouth to a dangling ring and the four-months baby clasps it in his hand, and he notes that only at eight months does the dominance of this mouth reaction decrease very perceptibly. The new baby is then a "mouth" and a "skin" baby, and perhaps too a "smell" baby, and he lives at a level of deep physical sensibility, the pleasurable absorption of which it is hard for an older person to realize. Some insight into it can be got by watching a baby suckling with a contented mother, herself at rest, and attending entirely to the baby, and noting the utter abandonment to feeling which is evident in the baby's eyes and his exploratory touching and the diffuse rhythmic movements of his body. This pleasurable absorption in his own feelings is where the baby really lives at first and decreasingly as the months go on. Such sensations mean a good life to him and it is not so much a life which he shares with his mother as a

<sup>1</sup> Winnicott: *Getting to Know Your Baby*. (Heinemann.)

'life within himself in his own rich sensations and which as he develops month by month he ultimately connects with her, and which forms the basis of his love relationship. For this as well as for other reasons most mothers give their babies a full six months of breast feeding before they commence weaning.

It is important to understand about these feelings. Otherwise it would be difficult to believe that there is any real psychological difference between good breast and good bottle feeding. Nevertheless, where mothers cannot feed their babies, first attitudes can be very happy if the mother gives the child her full bodily comfort and attention with feeding and if she makes up to him in periods of nursing and bodily closeness for the inevitable loss.

Babies differ considerably in their need for the feel and touch of the mother. Some can be safely put to sleep at night in a room alone, others need to be near at hand when the mother can soothe them once or twice at night for the first few months though not longer. All babies need periods of happy satisfied nursing, and as they grow older periods of free kicking and moving, within sight of the mother. Out of this primitive baby enjoyment they fashion their love.

It may seem strange to us that excretion and elimination are as much a pleasure to the child as his other bodily processes. This is evident in the baby in a concentrated withdrawnness of expression similar to his more prolonged absorption in suckling and in his happy smile after elimination. It is more frequently recognized in its more advanced stages in the child of eighteen months to two years where it appears as an interest and preoccupation with potting and the contents of pots. Even in the child of three or four it continues as an interest in these processes in animals and birds. Though young children do not like to be wet and cold, they do enjoy the sensuous

feelings of warm wetness and the experience of creating something with their bodies. If not rightly prevented they would smear and play with their excreta. While babies should be changed frequently and as soon as they have soiled themselves, the practice of holding them out and "catching" the motions at a young age deprives them of such pleasurable feelings at a time when they are too young to have learned to put more mature pleasures (like crawling and talking) in their place. Such training though it may save laundry work is not real training. A baby's sphincters up to almost a year are an involuntary muscle and only about this time does their whole muscular structure change so as to make voluntary control possible. The "training" which is undertaken before this time is therefore illusory in character, frequently breaks down at eighteen months or later and is then much more difficult to establish. The loss to the child in ease from strain and in sensory gratification is not therefore outweighed by growth in *self-control*. The child's "self" is extremely embryonic in the first six months of life and in any case these muscles do not come under conscious control until about eight or ten months. It is interesting to compare the time chosen to commence habit training in other countries with our own. British temperament and practice is to begin a few weeks after birth, six to eight months is the chosen time in the States and from ten months to a year in Continental countries. Experience with children whose habit training has been difficult to establish or has broken down in later years points unmistakably to undue states of strain originating in premature training or undue pressure to be clean. The best time for a commencing training is about a year. It is quite a mistake to think that satisfying the primitive hungers of babies, whether it be for suckling, nursing, or elimination, will make a spoiled demanding child. On the contrary, a child who is satisfied physically and



emotionally is a good child free to develop new powers as they mature in him. The unsatisfied child is neurologically and psychologically preoccupied with a sense of loss, and remains infantile because organic needs are so blind and so compelling. The child's rich or unhappy experience in babyhood is his first "feel" of life, and though because it is so diffuse it may not remain as a memory, it is remembered by the child's nerve and body fibre, and remains as an indissoluble attitude. It reasserts itself not as a remembered experience but as a blind tendency to make up the loss at a later time when perhaps in fact such wishes are inopportune and retrograde. This "acting out" of losses without the conscious memory of the loss can be seen in the way all children finger-suck long after weaning and in the relatively rare child who reacts to any disappointment later on by spells of greedy eating, or by a breakdown in clean habits. Old wishes are never forgotten by the complicated body-mind of the child. They are only slowly given up and their primitive forms allowed to sink to the bottom of the mental structure. So it is not surprising that the normal child grows not with a steady upward progress but with a curious back and forth movement, two steps forward and one backward perhaps. For a while there is intermittent struggle with the impulses which have in fact been given up but which from time to time reassert themselves before—in their original forms—they ultimately become quiescent. Growth like this when we find it is reassuring. It is a sign that the child and his guardian are not expecting too much and that development is proceeding without undue strain.

## TRAINING WITHOUT STRAIN

*(a) Principle of gradualness in relation to times of commencing training*

It is particularly important to get a clearer understanding of the principles involved in this distinction between safe growth away from the baby's primitive organic satisfactions and training which involves undue pressure. It is not at all a distinction between voluntary giving up on the baby's part and giving up forced upon him by the adult. Some babies would scarcely wean themselves before two or even three years if there was no pressure to do so and yet weaning can be safely begun with most children about six months. Yet at nine months if carried out violently it can be quite disastrous. Weaning from bottle or breast on to hard feeding at three months is seldom anything but unsatisfactory.

Considerable nervous and muscular development takes place at a slow pace in the first five months. The child's perceptions become clearer and co-ordinated. Slowly memory fashions the permanent features of his life into objects and people and happenings which can be retained in his mind and are saturated with feeling and about which expectations can be enjoyed. Diffuse organic sensation and blind longing give place to expectations converging in events which gain content from memory. To know what comes next is obviously exciting to young children who do not yet take memory for granted. Hand and limb control, gabbling and crawling develop and expectation becomes effort graduated in its successfulness. This is a long and slow process, and before five or six months it is not a reality of any size. The whole point of life before this is organic and sensual and so it is unwise to be mean and restrictive with these pleasures. At this stage the organic can only recede as the conscious intellectual and motor forces make

headway if the child is not to be bereft of his joy in life.

The first principle therefore to guide us about a time to begin big new steps in training is not to lessen the organic pleasure of life before new intellectual and motor pleasures mature to replace them in part. The second principle might seem to be the importance of gradualness. Even when the baby is ripe for training, he is only ripe to begin it. A sudden and drastic curtailment of what seems good to him can only be a shock—would indeed be a shock to a more mature organism. There are only two kinds of training therefore, gradual and shock training. The most successful example of gradualness is to be seen in the weaning of the baby which takes place between six months and nine months from five breast or bottle feeds a day to two breast feeds at eight and a half months (6 a.m. and 10 p.m.) and four meals of a varied type; and at nine or ten months to a full diet eaten in the normal way.<sup>1</sup> This type of weaning is now rarely departed from, though war-time necessities for mothers to take up work at short notice produced many unfortunate exceptions.

Because every child is a whole person and not a series of functions to be trained without regard to each other, gradualness means more than slow steps in the operation of giving up any single organic pleasure. Each step in training should be related to the child's whole life process. Most children show signs of restlessness and fret as each tooth comes through and some even run slight temperatures. Almost all children need more nursing and a greater amount of comforting and fondling at this time. Sometimes they go off hard food and demand more suckling for a few days and wise mothers adapt their feeding and nursing arrangements to the baby's temporary demands rather than to the accepted schedule over these short periods.

<sup>1</sup> See National Society of Maternity and Child Welfare's weaning chart.

This is only one of the reasons why it is unwise to burden the six-months child with the deprivations of habit training in addition to the strain of first weaning, and the pain of early teething. The child adapts himself usually quite well to one or other of these processes, but seldom well to them all together. At ten months or a year he will have overcome some of his teething and all his weaning troubles, and habit training can be safely begun. By two most children are quite clean in the day though it is normal enough for night wetting to continue a little longer.

(b) *The principle of gradualness in regard to methods of training. Weaning*

Early suckling is one of the most active functionings of the baby. In fact mother and baby are very active together. It cannot be said that the mother just "lets" the baby feed from her. Medical research shows how very strongly the mother's will to feed and pleasure in giving the breast affects the flow of milk. Nor can it be said that the baby "lets" himself be fed. A small amount of observation shows with what force and vigour he sucks as a finger put inside a baby's mouth will prove, and how his hands explore the mother's body and his own limbs move in rhythm and delight. Even the new baby is an "active" feeder. The move to spoon feeding sometimes makes a very drastic change here. A baby who is wrapped up in a towel so that his hands can no longer move and explore and submitted to feeding in a passive fashion will certainly be a much cleaner baby at the end of the meal than if he is allowed to continue his old active approach. But it is sure that the baby is not very interested in cleanliness and is much interested in activity. Gesell's norms indicate that the average baby at six months can sit for a few moments unsupported

and at seven months for a longer period. The eight-months baby has a firmly established sitting posture. The eight- or nine-months baby can therefore be put in a high chair and given a spoon to hold while his mother feeds him. If the food is placed in his bowl or soup plate in small quantities it is not only warmer and more palatable, but in the next couple of months first the baby's hands and then his own spoon will make the first movements towards feeding himself. This is necessarily a more messy process than that of the hygienic nurse who defends the baby against touching the food himself till he is old enough to eat it cleanly and not soil the surroundings. But as this may not happen for some months yet—an inevitable hiatus is therefore made in growth. Moreover at nine months a baby is amazingly active with his arms and hands and legs, at ten months he may begin to crawl, at eleven he can stand and push himself along, at one year he will walk with a little help and at fourteen months without help. Between eight and fourteen months therefore is a period when the urge to activity, having gone through slow and silent stages of maturation, now springs into being and gathers such a rapid momentum that its frustration easily seems unbearable to the child. Life is movement to him. Prolonged periods of passive feeding should therefore be avoided. The alternative is to make preparations for cleaning up after a meal to be relatively easy. His chair can be placed on a square of linoleum and a good big feeder used. The mess can thus be kept within reasonable bounds, which is far better than to sacrifice movement and the child's pleasure in being active over his food to a too early discipline in cleanliness. Otherwise he quickly comes to connect food with an unbearable restriction of his movement and may decide he does not like his meals. After all it is just this same principle of self-help and self-service which makes the meal in a nursery school such a pleasure to children and

in part why many children eat well at the nursery when they do not eat much at home.

It should also be remembered that mess has a positive attraction to the child until his habit training has been completed and when messing has been taken out of feeding some of its pleasure has also been removed. When, in addition, activity and self-help are denied, this too robs the meal of a great deal of the two-year-old's enjoyment of it. Not infrequently he decides that it is not worth the effort, and becomes difficult over food.

One further point should be mentioned. Mother and baby have been very rightly called the nursing couple, i.e. the feeding couple.<sup>1</sup> The baby all too readily connects mother and food from the fact that his feeding at the breast was so important a relationship. The longer he is made to eat and drink only with her ministrations and active interference, the longer he will treat the food as a part of her relationship to him, and not just as an independent need and pleasure of his own. He is therefore likely to act out with the food all his changing relationships to her. Temporary anger with mother will show itself in rejection of her food, and in the prolonged period of obstinacy which is normal in the second year, the child is very likely to use rejection of his meals as a trump card. All this can be prevented by a minimum of interference with the child's meal activity from nine to eighteen months. In that time he establishes an independent attitude to food and in the next six months clean habits can slowly be taught. Children trained in this way avoid feeding disturbances and food fads, are lusty and independent eaters and by two years or thereabouts clean enough to be a pleasure at the family table.

Training to eat in the adult way involves a very radical alteration in the child's method of activity but should as far as possible be carried out without damaging his

<sup>1</sup> See Merrill Middlemore, *The Nursing Couple*. (Hamish Hamilton.)

effortfulness which has been paramount from the time of breast feeding. His skill in feeding himself matures more rapidly because there has not been a period of denied activity. Thus true gradualness in methods of training avoids the tension of such an effortless gap.

It may be said in passing that feeding disturbances with older children are open to cure by the same methods as have been suggested for preventing them. All the nursery-school methods of self-help if introduced bring back pleasure in activity. A slight degree of latitude in regard to messiness revives the older pleasure in mess which is so clear in sand and water play. Above all the withdrawal of the mother's interest in the food and her refusal to be involved in a contest over eating even if for a while the child eats very little, quite soon and inevitably produces a normal pleasure in meals.

(c) *The principle of gradualness applied to methods in habit training*

New babies show a great variety in the times and frequency with which they pass stools. Regularity and a daily motion are by no means to be looked for in young babies.<sup>1</sup>

Mothers nevertheless usually show their pleasure when the child begins to have a daily motion. In any case changing a baby is regularly an occasion for loving interchange between mother and child. The baby naturally feels she is pleased with him. Once training begins this is altered. The mother must of necessity teach the child that she dislikes dirty nappies and a pool on the floor, but it is very important that she shall make him realize that

<sup>1</sup> See pamphlet, *Breast Feeding*, by Winifred Coppard (published by National Association of Mental Health, price 6d.) also *Babies who do not conform to Rule*, by Flora Shepherd (published by Home and School Council, price 6d.).

it is not his excretory functions which she dislikes, and certainly not him. She simply does not like the dirty matter. In this way a child can be trained without feeling that his body *processes* are disgusting and that until he can control them *he* is bad and naughty. It is much better not to use these words but to say instead: "How nasty *it* is. Poor you! You must be uncomfortable." This is a distinction possible for a child of a year to understand. Put in this way it is quite clear that the mother is not simply suddenly reversing her old approving attitude. She is still very interested in his motions and will listen to his talk about them, and approve of his own observations on their size and shape, but she likes them done in the orderly grown-up way.

Between six months and a year the child has developed considerably in his wish to please his mother, and if she shows the right appreciation of baby interests in the process, he is willing to try hard to achieve her standards about how they should be done. Mutual approval is often the key to willing growth. Unmitigated disapproval widens the gap between infant and mother and may just fill him with despair and rebellion. Earlier or more disapproving training is likely to give the child a senselessly acute shame about his body which may later on even carry over to his mature sexual feelings, and so hamper his development as an adult.

The child's new-found sense of inadequacy about elimination will be less of a shock if he can do a little himself to remove the mess. Wiping up a puddle is a clever thing and shows how grown up he is just at the point where his babyishness, in elimination at least, is failing to please. What he loses in one respect he makes up in another, and gradualness is again satisfied. Besides he is now at an age to put himself in the role of agreeing to the training and wanting to co-operate in it. This is real *self-control*, and not mother control. It is part of his



subtle preparation for independence, and when the time comes for him to show how he can wash and dress himself unaided it will have played its part in that too. We cannot expect an active independence in these matters if we have rigidly schooled a child in passivity to *our* wishes in bodily processes that are their forerunners, like feeding and cleanliness training. Once trained in this way a child does not easily go back. He is less obstinate in his second year, and because kindness has dictated his own training, in later years he will be kinder to himself and so to others.

Disapproval which makes the child feel passive and "put upon" often results in his active rebellion and causes a battle of wills over the pot. This should not be confused with real independence. It simply delays training altogether, may produce constipation and inevitably shows that this bodily process is linked in the child's mind with his mother's will which he is determined to resist, and is a negative form of extreme dependence on her will. He may use the pot, as it has been suggested he would use the food, as a means of thwarting her, which is very far from the grown-up attitude to pots and food towards which we are trying to lead him. One cannot separate cleanliness training from what the mother wishes of course, but a wise parent will first lead the child along the way which makes his wishes synchronize with hers. The unwise one by constantly fussing over the potting, talking a lot about it and feeling if knickers are wet, really indicates to the child that her wishes synchronize with his. She is as "emotional" about elimination as is the baby part of him and for this emotionalism which means to him that she is still as wrapped up in his body as she was in his infancy, he is willing to pay the price of her disapproval and stay untrained. Even though she is urging him to grow up, her way of doing so only makes him determined to retain her baby care. This type of training often results in a battle of wills not only over

potting but over every activity where defiance can be successfully attempted. It is all part of the effort to lure the mother on to further and further concentration on bodily care.

- (d) *The nature of the relationship to his mother which arises on the basis of the child's organic and sensuous feelings*

It is doubtful if for some days or weeks the new-born baby can realize that he is a separate being from the mother, or even that there is a world outside the organic and sensuous states of pleasure and pain which make up his own feelings. From the very beginning, however, he reacts to the human presence as if it brought comfort. The voice and touch, even the shadow falling on him of a human presence seems, as Charlotte Bühler notes, to bring promise of satisfaction and reassurance. From six weeks onwards his pleasurable reactions become much more positive. He will coo, smile and laugh not only to his mother but to other human comforters. Up to the age of five months or thereabouts these responsive signs are given not only to the mother but to the *situation* of being cared for, and watched over. It seems certain from the war-time experience of Dorothy Burlingham and Anna Freud with babies who were separated from their parents at an early age that under five months this separation can be effected without harm provided good substitute nursing is available.<sup>1</sup> One woman is as good as another at this time, though of course not a succession of changing women whose variation in handling and routine will inevitably disappoint the baby's gathering expectations. The mother so far (and the father when he looks after the child's bodily needs from time to time and is therefore simply a good mother)

<sup>1</sup> Dorothy Burlingham and Anna Freud: *Infants without Families*. (Allen and Unwin.)

is for the child a person who produces his own satisfactory states of feeling.

About five months, however, memory and perception working together with sensuous feelings have begun to produce such particular individual and differentiated expectations about his mother in the child that it becomes evident that she is a person for whom no one else can substitute. Children about this time begin to cry when a stranger approaches as they do not do earlier. Footsteps or a voice may have led the child to expect his mother and the stranger is a disappointment. From this time on the relation between mother and child is definitely seen to be enriched by an ever extending background of memories between them. To the child for a long while now this relationship will seem unique and utterly personal in curious ways. Unless his mother is bathing and feeding him there is no bathing and feeding in the world. A residential nursery child of three expressed what the young child feels but cannot say, "How does matron know how to bath? She doesn't bath me."

For this reason the child over five months feels being deprived of his mother's constant care even for a short while as an utter deprivation, and her presence an insurance that his needs will be met. Having no knowledge of time and "other places" her absence means permanent and irreparable desertion. He cannot understand that she is "next door" or coming soon. A mother realizes this so well that unless she has been misled by false teaching that it is good to leave the child to cry, she answers his call on waking at once with her voice and goes to him as soon as possible. Mothering after five months is for a time a very exacting profession. Before that time if he is comfortable and fed the child will often lie awake for a considerable while and show no fear. After that time he is liable to be very frightened unless she comes at the cry which he usually gives almost as soon

as he wakes. Because of the despair which these feelings of desertion arouse in him, a child left to cry can work himself into a sobbing state which is hard to soothe and which leaves him feeling very insecure indeed if the experience is repeated. On the other hand a child who is sure that his mother will answer speedily shows it by a cry which is often nothing but an accepted signal between them and *sounds* just like this.

Even when she responds so conscientiously to his demands the careful mother is at pains from quite an early stage to displace some of his interest and attention from herself to playthings which can give him a little of the comfort he wants from her. Sucking toys, like a clean pipe or a darning-mushroom, or hard things to bite or objects that will dangle or move and sound are the needs of the first few months. Without these a young baby will have nothing to comfort himself by except finger-sucking and especially at weaning time by masturbation, both of which activities being entirely normal need not be interfered with or make us anxious. They will be less prolonged if play objects and the mother's presence to play with him are forthcoming readily enough. They mark a stage when the child must find a very wide satisfaction for his feelings and will lapse with his growing maturity. Infantile masturbation will recur again at three or four years when it has rather a different origin<sup>1</sup> and thumb-sucking will go on for two or three years longer, decreasingly as the child becomes independent but nearly always with lapses at bedtime for several years. These habits will be least built into permanencies where the child's movements are restricted only as much as safety demands.

Though baby feelings and primitive sensations linked with his mother's personal care are so much the basis of

<sup>1</sup> See *Further Trying Habits*, by Ruth Thomas. (National Association for Mental Health, price 6d.)

the child's first relationship with her, these early play materials are a wise preparation for gradually weaning him from this close bond on to a very varied life of action and interest as his powers mature. Much of this must wait on maturing nervous and muscular functions but once this physical maturity has occurred the child can either exploit it in a forward movement out to life or use it with niggardliness and uncertainty because he is unwilling to relax even little by little in his demands for the old organic relationship. In encouraging him to be more willing to do so the mother's own attitudes play an enormous part. Is she prepared as time goes on to make feeding, nursing, eliminating, bathing less and less a matter of maximum feeling and urgency between them and accept them more and more as facts of not so special import in a world which the child's new powers commence to make increasingly full of joy in movement, sound, sight, touch and balance? If so, then the child will certainly follow suit at a rate which is limited only by his maturing bodily prowess and intelligence, but with an avidity which is dependent not only on these but on her willingness to let him go and in fact encourage him to do so.

Some mothers are too inclined to enjoy mothering their children exclusively in the organic way. They prefer to have children sleep in their rooms, and give them sweets to comfort them when another mother would give a toy. Other mothers give too little organic care and overquickly emphasize their pleasure in maturation. On the whole, the less educated mother belongs to the first class, and the middle-class mother to the latter. Both types of care play their part in achieving a rich emotional life rooted in deep feelings, but branching out to a wide range of skills and interests freely indulged in. What is needed is careful attention to the growing points of each and not at any time to let one side flower wildly at the expense of the other.

It is important therefore to study how fast the perceptual, motor and memory powers of the child mature and in what order, and how each step in maturation brings a new emphasis into the baby's relationship with his mother—a more conscious sharing of interests and occupations and skills which have less and less to do with the child's organic and sensuous states, and more with the crystallization of those personal abilities and experience which makes the very individual "self" of each child. This is not to minimize the importance of the early organic relationship to people and bodily states which even in adulthood are of outstanding importance, but merely to give them their proper place in the foundation of personality.

## SECTION II. GROWTH OF THE SELF IN THE FIRST TWO YEARS

### PACE AND RHYTHM IN LEARNING

Every baby is an individual even at the beginning of life. Merrill Middlemore's<sup>1</sup> careful observations on suckling babies show how from the very outset each baby has his own aptness for sucking voraciously or slowly, steadily or in short spells and with varying degrees of abandon to the process. As yet we have no observations to tell us whether the rhythm of this earliest approach to feeding is at all related to the rhythm and pace of the ensuing approaches to life, whether for instance the steady voracious suckling is as determined and persistent in his efforts to gain control over movement and in his explorations of the sensory panorama of life. It seems likely that if his natural rhythm serves him well in that mother can adapt herself to it and together they make feeding a success, then he will continue to absorb the rest of his experiences in the rhythm

<sup>1</sup> *The Nursing Couple*. (Hamish Hamilton.)

and pace which are natural to him. If, however, there is trouble over his natural pace, the new baby is never so adaptable that he can readily change it to fit in with our wishes without damage to himself. All that happens is that he loses confidence in his own way and may therefore be deprived of confidence in his next ventures. This individual rhythm and pace would seem therefore to be an important thing to respect from the outset. For while a baby's growth follows a pattern in which the stages are determined more or less universally for all babies, yet it is particularly his pace, viz. steadiness, alacrity, sporadicness or slowness, which marks every baby's first most individual characteristic.

Every mother wishes her baby to be at least normal in his rate of growth and most mothers take pride if their babies are advanced. It is therefore important to realize that the normal covers a very wide span. Normal walking takes place anywhere between a year and eighteen months and here as everywhere in education, opportunity and ripeness work in together and produce the optimum time for each baby. If a mother is anxious because movement is delayed, the child too will be disturbed by her worry. After five months he takes all his forward steps to please her and while her encouragement and pleasure in his achievements are thrilling, too much pressure to advance seems to him a little like fault finding. He is then deprived of his very strongest incentives to progress—his parents' pleasure and surprise when success comes. Once their own babies have successfully accomplished a stage mothers forget their own great sense of expectancy about these events and many a mother has been depressed and made anxious because of her neighbours' stories of their own precocious children. A wise mother studies her baby's pace from the beginning for herself. Where a mother has had several children she worries much less over their rate of progress because she knows how varied

the individual pace has been. If a baby is really slow then the health visitor and the infant-welfare doctor are by far the most reliable guides as to possible causes of difficulty.

### PERCEPTION AND MEMORY

At about two months most babies show signs that their original inertia and distaste for stimulation of a perceptual sort has begun to break down. They start to stare towards the light instead of away from it and follow moving objects as they pass beyond their field of vision. Soon they follow the direction of sound by slight head movements. By four months the child already shows a preference for visual over simultaneous auditory perceptions, and will neglect the one for the other. At five months he begins to reach out towards objects that please him, and shows signs of welcoming objects that seem already to be recognized as having been seen before. At six months he recognizes his bottle unmistakably and mothers realize how to prepare a bottle in sight or sound of the child often stimulates him fatally to quite ravenous impatience. At eleven months Charlotte Bühler found that children remember the contents of a little box well enough to miss an object that has been removed from it when the box is given to them again a minute later. She noted how the memory span for such a situation increases to three minutes at a year, to eight minutes at fifteen months and at eighteen months to seventeen minutes.

These artificial test situations are only pointers to how rapidly things grow to be remembered from earlier settings in the period between five to eighteen months. An adult's actual perception gains much more from memory than from the passing presentations of any particular moment. When we only see a thing, memory simultaneously shows us how it will smell, feel, taste and sound; its meaning is always built up much more from



our past experiences than from the quite fragmentary presentation which we get at any one moment and which may affect in the main only one or two of our many senses. No wonder therefore that the child finds memory growth and the development of recognition so thrilling an experience. It means that he begins to know in advance what things will do and feels safe with them in that he can control or use them, anticipating the result. Between five and eighteen months memory and recognition are themselves pleasant experiences and for a time the child finds most of his new excitements in merely re-experiencing and anticipating.

At nine months children love to wrap and unwrap tiny articles in soft paper, enjoying refinding them, knowing how they will be even when hidden and verifying these anticipations time and time again. Soon after this they love peep-bo games and hiding things in tins to rediscover them. At nine months Anne was observed to drop piece after piece of the posting-box material on to the floor, pausing to listen as each part struck and sounded. One piece fell on some knitting and Anne's head was over the cot in a trice to see why the thing did not happen as she had anticipated. At fourteen months most children know where the sweets are hidden and tug you in that direction to indicate their desire. On returning home after a holiday they revel in refinding the old objects. At this stage I have known a child inquire for bacon at breakfast or a bun for tea if these articles were not on the table.

On the whole we tend to underestimate children's memories in the first year and a half. Charlotte Bühler's test results were for objects of no particular emotional significance seen only once. Young children have a surprisingly long memory for daily repeated events and for things which have roused strong feelings in them at the time. At two Mark saw a cot cover in a shop window

like his own which had been out of use for nine months. "When I was a baby" he said, "I did have one of that." Anne had diphtheria injections at thirteen months and did not again visit a doctor for eight months. On the second occasion Anne made no protest about the visit, but when Dr. Brown himself came in Anne shrank away and said "Brown hurts." Painful and pleasant experiences at this time very frequently colour children's attitudes. They are often very badly put out for instance in the second year when the family moves to a new house and sometimes show their first difficulties about going to sleep at night alone after this. They may need someone to sit with them at bedtime for the first week or so.

This tends to show how very emotionalized children's early perceptions are. There is a vivid pleasure in the expectation of things being the same. Often this leads children to look for the thing they know and would like in all kinds of situations which only slightly resemble them. Anne at fifteen months wanted each night to look for the moon before she went to bed. So during the day all round things became "moon." David who had a passionate interest at seventeen months in his father's coming and going by car, would point to pictures of harrows, trucks and carts and even lawnmowers and say "car." To almost all children for a few months in the first year all men are "daddy." Nor is it always a wish for pleasant things which directs this finding of an ordered similarity in the world of things. Anne disliked the noise of owls and for a while all birds became "owl."

Young children's feelings of anticipation seem in a very large measure often to direct their observations. They see things as the same which, except in their feelings, are only superficially so. Nevertheless, quite early in the second year in this modest way we can find the beginnings of relational thinking which binds together the chaotic jumble of "things" into groups with some underlying

similarity—classification in a very lowly form has begun. Three factors are important in the development of this process to greater objectivity. One is obviously the gradual maturation of the child's perceptual powers—a matter of time, nervous growth and intelligence. The second is his ability to bear disappointment or having expectation disconcerted in some way. What is expected does not always happen. The man is not “dada.” Some children cling to their anticipations unduly long to avoid the pain of disappointment. Others, and generally those with a safe and good relationship with their parents, face their disappointments and absorb the new different experience as having a right of its own. Those who are already so disappointed with the organic background of their lives can face no further disappointments and only very slowly indeed become willing to absorb the new experience, in spite often of good intelligence. Thus the child's organic background is fundamental to his assimilation of the new.

The third important factor is opportunity to test out many new experiences with a mass of different material. The child who is free to explore the kitchen cupboards and the variety of fabrics in a living-room has untold opportunity for checking his anticipations and gradually putting his world into an informed orderliness. Anything and everything therefore which is safe is good play material for the child in his second year. He will use boxes, tins, paper, wooden shapes, especially round rings or round blocks and small blocks not larger than two inch cubes. Some children like picture books with an adult to turn over the pages as early as a year—most children by eighteen months. With this material he will test out all his expanding anticipations, delight when they are justified and absorb his disappointments into formulating new expectations. Wishful thinking slowly approximates to reality thinking—and the classification which begins in

wishing for the sameness ends in a scientific rightness which can stand up safely to the challenge of every new observation and event. This process goes only a very little distance in the second year. For several years yet the child will relate his observations more to his emotionalized anticipations—wishes and fears. The basis for the objectivity we hope for certainly lies in the way maturation and experience work together in the initial two years of life, forwarded or retarded by already formed emotional attitudes, and the degree of security they imply.

### MOVEMENT

A new baby's movements except for the very finely co-ordinated acts of suckling are random and diffuse and only with the slow maturation of the nervous and muscular systems does one set of muscles and then another begin to display a nicer co-ordination. The first observable differences appear in the second and third months. Development can be considerably helped before this time if baby has a regular kicking period on a hard couch or bed, with as few clothes as possible to hamper him. Nappies should be folded to give as much freedom of leg movement as possible.

In a host of minute changes which take away from the baby's early motor helplessness, a few stand out. In the third month the child comes to use one leg or hand separately from the other. This independence of hand makes it possible for him to grasp things separately and bring them together with independent action and so relate them one to the other. At four months the child no longer opens his mouth to all things that interest him but spontaneously reaches out with his hand, becoming less and less a mouth baby. At five months he can raise his head and shoulders with support. At seven he can grasp an object like a spoon and brandish it. Between six and

seven months he ceases to grasp small objects in the palm of his hand but uses thumb and finger. At seven he can sit unsupported and play with his feet.

The moment when a child can sit up marks a very fundamental change in his outlook, in that he can now bring the world into his own view at will. It is not surprising therefore that he is at pains to explore and handle everything that is available. If there is nothing he usually strips his cot and pram and throws everything on to the floor. A wooden spoon to bang with perhaps tied on to the pram is an excellent toy at this stage though toys pinned to himself are usually disregarded; tins and bricks to drop into them and objects to throw are first preference. Soft toys which are so often given to children in the first eighteen months are almost of no use at all except to throw and later to sit on. At nine months he can fit tins and cubes into each other, and later pile them up in towers. Between nine and twelve months he loves hiding things under tins and refinding them. Paper tearing is enjoyed but too frequently yet the paper goes into the mouth. Occupations at this stage are repeated endlessly.

Between seven and nine months a baby spends a good deal of time in his pram outdoors and many busy mothers find the pram into which a child can be strapped quite useful for long periods in the day until walking begins some time after a year. I have even known children spend most of their day in a pram until eighteen months.

It is difficult to write against this practice when mothers are so very hardworked, kitchens so small and the wear and tear of life excessive. In their examination of the advantages and disadvantages of nursery life for children in the first two years, Dorothy Burlingham and Anna Freud<sup>1</sup> were struck by the greater prowess in and zest for movement of nursery children who so

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*

often have the advantages of freedom in this respect, over children in their own homes. I recently watched a child of eighteen months sit on a couch for three hours at an adult party, making only such forward and backward a movement of his body as would have been permitted had he been strapped into his pram. The child appeared intelligent and was not yet walking. I have seen one child who having learned to sit up, abandoned the accomplishment altogether some few months later, I think because of the pram straps. There is no doubt that such a deliberate restriction of movement not only retards the child's progress but may put a permanent embargo on free movement, curtailing the early zest. Very often children whose pleasure in movement is thus hindered or who are left too long in prams without play-things—which eventually go over the side unless frequently returned—are thrown back for amusement or occupation on infantile habits like thumb-sucking and masturbation. Where these in turn are interfered with—sometimes effectively—the condition of the child is not much different from an adult in solitary confinement. Observation proves that the paralysis of mental vitality can be as great in one as in the other. Children at the pram stage are best not left alone for long periods, and flats for future families should certainly have small open-air balconies off the living-room where children can be set down with a heap of suitable junk on rugs where they have sight of their mothers from time to time.

At about nine months some children roll over and begin crawling movements. Many children will crawl as early as ten months, and at this time they show a terrific zest in jumping if held on the lap. With the period of movement the father comes into his own in a family. He is rarely so associated in the child's mind with early organic care as the mother, but once activity and the interest in objects gather momentum the father has a

tremendous function in helping the child experience a new kind of relationship based on his new maturing powers rather than his need for sensuous and organic satisfaction.

The crawling stage presents many difficulties in small modern households. Stairs are the obvious pitfall but it is surprising how quickly children learn to negotiate them if an adult goes up and down carefully with them for a while. On the whole it is often better to do without stairguards and spend a little time teaching the child at the outset. This is the time when children explore the cupboards and drawers and climb over hassocks, which are very useful obstructions, and are in and out of doorways with amazing rapidity. At this time particular playthings are of much less account. They will be returned to later but for the present movement and movement only is the magical thing. Just at the time when children seem almost space drunk some mothers are driven to make extensive use of the play-pen. This may not be unuseful in the help it gives the child to pull himself up, and so to gain confidence to walk. Though practical necessity drives parents to use pram straps and the play-pen, it is well to remember that *from the child's point of view* the play-pen falls into the same category as pram straps—it has no virtues at all.

Between crawling and walking (anywhere between ten and fifteen months) the child learns to stand and push any good support ahead of him. Chairs and boxes on an uncarpeted floor are a great delight. At this time children begin to get their first bumps so the mother's anxiety is almost constant. They start too to make their first attacks on the tablecloths and precious objects now within reach. The day can be full of alarms for the average mother unless she takes a few steps like having a fireguard or some high shelves and cupboards for precious articles, or even a window screen to make life easier for herself. Otherwise she is too inclined to have her heart in her

mouth and jump the children's into theirs. Such constant interference may damp down that effort and initiative which in a few years will be quite under the child's control and very precious.

I do not believe in teaching the child to take his bumps "like a man." Bumps do hurt and need comforting. It is never a good thing to teach a child to pretend to himself about hurts. He only feels that you love him best when he is happy and may be impelled to a whole process of premature self-control which culminates in his denying that he has any unhappy emotions at all. Such a façade is not the understanding relationship desirable between adult and child and when, moreover, the child begins to pretend to himself about his emotions he loses the only really natural guides he has to what he wants to do in life.

On the other hand I have seen young children taking a bump quite happily till they caught sight of the anxious look on an adult's face or the sharp note in her voice. The anxious mother is often neither sympathetic nor able to teach her child to take his bumps well. The sensible mother on the other hand comforts her child and sometimes sends him back to try again, being careful not to overdo the love she gives him on these occasions. Bumps may quite easily become an aim in themselves as a short cut to the loving baby comfort which is still a first rival to the child's newly found adventurousness.

In the crawling and early walking stages it is more normal for a child to be dirty than clean. He will also at this time begin to feed himself which does not make for great cleanliness. It is good to be able to take this for granted and not fuss unnecessarily over the child's body. That again may interfere with the weaning from organic pleasures which by this time should be well on the way. Quite a reasonable hygiene can be maintained without the mother giving the child the idea that she is chiefly



preoccupied with body care. For the same reason at about a year most mothers introduce play material into the bathtime. It is a source of great pleasure and interest and something of the child's more grown-up interests are allowed to carry over into those parts of his care where he is still most dependent. Corks, boats and rubber dolls cater for the child's growing activity and independence and take the emphasis off body play at bathtime.

Walking once well established, say usually by a year and a half, the way is opened for new pushing and pulling activities. Objects to push are much preferred. Pulling objects attract the child to look back and result in much frustration and many tumbles. Toy carts, carpet-sweepers, lawnmowers and a rattling tin fixed to a steady stick, are all useful, especially if they are light and move easily. Here again the problem of the child's pace becomes paramount. These days mothers mostly have to take young children shopping. With the advent of town life there is seldom anyone to leave the child with and nurseries for such short periods are long overdue. Much of the pleasure which the child has now for vigorous movement can be surprisingly lessened if he is pushed and pulled along at an adult rate. Many mothers continue to take the pram on shopping expeditions well into the end of the second year. A fold-up push chair that will go on buses is invaluable.

As soon as he is at home on his feet a child will begin to take up again his old interest in sedentary play and finer hand co-ordination, which lapses for a while while the period of being space drunk is at its height. The grasping of objects between thumb and forefinger usually begins in the seventh month, following the earlier efforts to grasp with the palm. I have seen this so well developed by nine months in a small boy that he would spend five minutes trying to pick up a hair from his table. Feeding-time gives great scope here; small sandwich squares

about three-quarters of an inch help the child to begin feeding himself and develop his pleasure in finger prehension. Some children love to turn the pages of an adult book as a delicate exercise for this new-found power. Pegs-and-holes boards, and certain kinds of button threading are possible after one and a half years. The large buttons with loops behind are preferable and can be threaded with a bodkin or tapestry needle. Pea shelling also belongs here. A large bag with assorted small bricks not larger than two-inch cubes are fun to turn out and provide the mass of material with which children at this age love to surround themselves. Crayons and papers for scribbling and a rubber to rub out are a great delight in the second half of the second year. Screw-top jars and screwing toys are not often managed before two, but can be given earlier for trying out. Tough picture books with thick paper and illustrated magazines are much appreciated. Towards the end of the year mending books with sticky paper tape can be an obsession with children. They love also sticking with elastoplast. A small set of drawers about eighteen inches in height is invaluable and can easily be made from small boxes. One child used to spend hours packing and unpacking the drawers, opening and refinding the objects. The game was to cry "away, away" when all was packed in, and "again, again" as they were opened up again. Opening and shutting doors can be a passion at seventeen months. Knobs that turn and all slot door bolts which move in and out, and calendars with rotating knobs are excellent additions to the junk box.

I have known a child as early as twenty-one months have her first successful experience of using nursery scissors. It happened just before bathtime, and on the first occasion she was so excited and overwrought by it she had to be put to bed unbathed. This is an exceptionally early time though.

Towards the end of the second year with the development of the child's wish to be like the parent, activities become quite domesticated—dusting and sweeping with a small broom, setting the table, picking and arranging flowers in tiny jars, gathering leaves and feathers in the garden, taking off shoes (though not buttoning them yet), taking on and off a pyjama coat (endlessly repeated when it is first accomplished,) hand washing (sometimes with the basin on the floor.) Pockets are great assets for little boys and girls at this time for the many things they collect on a walk and discard as soon as they come home.

Throughout all this activity there is no doubt that the child's imagination works unceasingly, making curious linkages between old and new experiences, but it is not easy always to detect the line of thought. Winifred de Kok<sup>1</sup> speaks of her daughter sitting in a hole being a yucca plant. Ann at sixteen months balanced her little finger on the table ruminatively like her father and said "Dada"; Mary at fifteen months pushed a row of bricks along making "puffer-like" noises. At twenty-one months, told to put the poker down, she said, "not poker, walking stick." At eighteen months she lifted a mass of knitting on a needle above her head and said "umbrella."

It is clear that there is a lot more in activity play than just the pleasure of movement. It is in fact thought in action, at a time when the child's vocabulary is quite inadequate to express the complicated relationships he begins to sense in things. But he can quite easily express his feelings about these relationships in manipulating objects to form some patterns with each other and himself. Before eighteen months we can seldom do more than guess at these thought processes but after that the child uses activity with an awkward rough speech which often is very expressive of thought complications. Ann filled a jug in

<sup>1</sup> *New Babies for Old*. (Gollancz.)

her bath, covered it with her face flannel, and depressing it a little said "pool" (twenty-one months). At twenty months Mary set all the hot water-bottles in a row with their openings facing the same way. She also set all the shoes in similar rows and concepts of back and front and top and bottom needed no further expression.

It is his preoccupation with the thought behind activity that makes a child so unwilling to be disturbed at play, and points even at this age to there being as much necessity to give him due warning that he must stop as there is to give warning to a preoccupied adult worker. Because we so seldom understand his thought processes our best procedure is often as little interference as possible unless the child asks for it. Young children are frequently overplayed with which means we try to make them play with our concepts and images and not their own, unmindful of the enormous gap between us.

How far the two-year-old has come from his early dependence on the mother begins to be seen in a well-developed child at the end of the second or middle of the third year. His constant cry is now "Let me" or "I can do it." He sets himself jobs that far exceed his ability and will scream with annoyance because they defeat him. At first he is only partly pacified if the adult shows him how and is not really satisfied till he can do it alone with a triumphant "I did it myself." This is surely a very desirable consummation to the early years of patient training.

### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Growth in social relationships means first of all being able to take account of what other people want as well as what you want yourself. In the child it means therefore a steady moving away from the demanding dependent attitude of the baby to his parents, especially to his mother.

Further, social relationships are in the main based on a community of interests, even if these are quite fleeting. Another prerequisite therefore is that a child shall have interests in objects and activities and not merely organic and sensuous ones. So while in no sense can we speak of the child under two as being a social being as the child of five certainly is, every move towards independence and the formation of interests and the development of activities is in a very real sense social in its import.

In the third place getting on co-operatively with others means knowing what to do with aggressive impulses towards other people when they arise. This means in part learning to control them, in part giving them forms of expression which are acceptable. When for instance a child develops speech he can "talk" his aggression which is more acceptable than his early screaming or destructive outbursts. Every step which the child takes therefore towards independence and to the attainment of interests and occupations as well as every development that takes place in his expression of aggression may be said to be vital steps in his social growth. Looked at in this way we can see a very rich development in socialization taking place in the first two years.

Social life begins for the child in his early organic relation to his mother, at first a very dimly perceived "feeding" mother and then as memory and perception develop a mother linked to the child by a rich background of remembered experience. But because the mother arouses feelings which can only rightly be described as passionate, it is not surprising that she too bears the brunt of the child's worst aggressive outbursts when she frustrates him. These are frequently at their height in the second year. It is true that they can be considerably curtailed by the gradualness with which the child is weaned from organic satisfactions but they are certainly not eliminated, so that a great deal of the child's future

social growth will depend on how his early aggressive outbursts are received. It is not an easy thing for a young child to find himself facing quick alternation between passionate love and fierce anger for the mother who is so necessary to him. "To be wroth with one we love, Doth work like madness in the brain." The child's ability to face these feelings in himself in the future with any reality to them—they are, after all, the basis of social feelings—depends therefore on how his mother understands them. The child who is overcared for in a bodily way will cling much longer to a bodily relationship and will therefore have more serious frustration and consequent angry feelings to combat. His very two-mindedness is frightening and in the ensuing battle between his loves and hates he is so preoccupied with the thought of his mother as to be tied more firmly than ever to her. It is not the child who loves his mother most who refuses ever to leave her side at eighteen months or to play alone, but rather the child who is obsessed by conflicts about her. We have seen how the emphasis on organic relationships is offset gradually in the second year by the way in which the child's own perceptual and motor development becomes a new focus for emotions. As play concentrates itself on one growing-point after another, the father and other adults enter into a different kind of co-operation to give the child pleasure. So they become linked on to his emotional life—to his love, and when they defeat his wishes on to his antagonism as well.

The wise mother welcomes and abets this dilution of his feelings as they spread themselves over a wider group of personalities and interests that are less organic. Dilution is easier where the family is large and older children can take part in the child's active play.

Even then the child of seventeen months rarely escapes a period where the necessary frustration of his old organic relationship results in strongly obstinate behaviour. Parents

frequently think "If I can't manage him now what shall I do when he is four?" In fact, the problem need never arise then, because by this time the child will have grown by a natural process of maturation into something much easier to handle—always supposing he is not given a taste for fighting the parents while he is growing out of it. Life at this stage can all too easily develop into a tug of war in which the child becomes more and more unwilling to give up the excitement of the battle. In these months if the child refuses to wash it is not just weakness to go away and do something else till he sees there isn't after all going to be a struggle. Then as often as not he'll come quite quietly. Handled in this way most children give up their trying obstinate behaviour by two or two and a half. If on the other hand the parent feels a mistaken obligation to enter battle with the child and ultimately subdue him, the result is a prolongation if not a definite fixing of this type of behaviour. The child carries it across to all his relations with people with a consequent great impoverishment of his social life.

I once saw a child of ten months crawling on a kitchen floor take up a raisin and put it in his mouth. His mother said firmly, "No, Mark," and removed it. He promptly found another, caught the smile with which she repeated her prohibition and opening his mouth very wide played at putting it in and out without letting go of it. Even at this early age a humorous relationship can often prevent the battle beginning.

Most children by fifteen months are capable of understanding a prohibition and if it comes from the parents sometimes of obeying with something of a good grace. At this stage they begin to abandon some of their own wishes for fear of the parents' displeasure and of losing their love, not because of any inner acceptance of the prohibition as having its own quality of rightness. In fact, conformity often goes along with considerable

resentment spoken or unspoken. Mary (twenty-one months) whose invasion of her mother's room in the early hours of the morning was usually met with "Go back to bed at once," was greeted on Christmas morning when she arrived in at five o'clock by her mother saying pleasantly "Happy Christmas, Mary." Mary smiled, took her mother's hand and patted it saying "Mummy good." The implication not to be missed was that normally Mummy in the morning was bad.

How we handle children's inevitable feelings that we are bad when we try to control them has enormous effects on the freedom of their later social development. Social contacts between children inevitably involve disagreements and antagonisms and become successful when the child learns not only social affection but socialized ways of expressing his disagreements and resentments. Now all these feelings are tried out in the first place within the family and first of all on the parents. When his early efforts at self-assertion are too drastically dealt with, and he becomes excessively well-behaved the result may be a crippling of all his aggression—including his willingness to stand up for himself. Such a child is always a social misfit and more often than not avoids playing with other children because he is powerless to protect himself. The parent's problem is how to teach him to control these feelings without making him feel all aggression is naughty, so paralysing his power to protect and stand up for himself and his own ideas. On this latter point will depend his ability to offer something new and constructive to society in later years.

His early antagonisms will be directed as much against his brothers and sisters as against his parents, and while aggressive actions need prohibiting and controlling it is not hard to do this and at the same time convey to the child that we quite understand his being angry. "I don't think you like me very much to-day—but perhaps later



on you will again." Or "You don't need to like Mary all the time—but don't hit her. Make her better now," are good ways of approach, though far from simple ones as most parents *do* want to believe that children do love them for twenty-four hours a day in spite of much evidence to the contrary. It is always a great grief to parents too to find that their sons and daughters *will* quarrel. These outbursts can in fact be very greatly reduced when children realize we understand their anger, and even sympathize with it, and nevertheless go on loving them, but they also have to understand that angry actions are different.

Making amends is a very salutary way of helping the child to re-establish himself in grace and to feel better once he has been angry. In this way we lessen his tendency to store up grudges when discipline has had its way but even making amends loses all its virtue when it is forced on the child. Quite quickly he will come to wanting to rub the hurt place of his own initiative if he is gently encouraged to do so, and compulsion is avoided.

About eighteen to twenty months children begin to show a very developed sense of belonging to the family group. At this time Ann often said at Sunday lunch when the whole family was for once together, "Mummy, Daddy, Ann, Mary, and Eileen" (the maid). This pleasure in their being all together is certainly the forerunner of later pleasure in group life. Attitudes that begin in the family quickly carry over to outsiders.

#### RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE THE FAMILY. ADULTS

By eight or ten months children are much attracted to listening to and observing all adults. At ten months a baby will cry to be taken back to the bustle of the kitchen. By eighteen months while he still resents familiar handling and touching from strangers he nevertheless observes

and imitates their less usual behaviour and gestures especially if these bring him applause. In this way he learns a little about us. People other than his parents are now of quite special interest—often indeed of the negative sort. “Bye-bye” may be a not infrequent invitation to the stranger to depart. It is wise to respect these special reactions for several years to come. A child does not become more socialized by having precocious politeness forced upon him. A really spontaneous child, though he more often than not will not “play” at correct social greetings, can give very great pleasure by his welcomes when they do come. This kind of behaviour is often killed by too early training.

#### (b) CHILDREN

Even at nine months children are interested in other babies though for a very long time this interest is more like their interest in playthings. Dorothy Burlingham and Anna Freud describe in detail how their Nursery children in their first two years went through the stage of treating other children as toys and playthings without any sense of their sensitiveness to misuse ; later, as rivals and nuisances, venting the full force of their aggression on them, and ultimately learned to comfort and soothe them in trouble, and to make amends when they had hurt them. They had many cases between fifteen months and two years of real early friendships of short duration between children.<sup>1</sup>

Though children in the normal family rarely have so much contact with other small children as those in a nursery, they show much the same stages in the contacts that do come their way. Parents often expect rather more in the way of good behaviour from two-year-olds at children's gatherings than the children are easily able to

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*

accomplish. In one afternoon a child will go through many phases and it is unwise to expect and try to exact anything like continued peaceable social contacts between a group of two-year-olds. Things are often made more difficult by too great insistence on willingness to share which at this early stage is far from being spontaneous. Apart from the strain and irritation which it imposes on the child it may be exacted at the cost of really spontaneous generosity later. A happy child who sees generous sharing in his family will come quite naturally to this once his wishes to be like the grown up mature and gather momentum in the third year. Here again gradualness and ripeness work in together, and it is a mistake to exert "mother control" to the detriment of real "self-control" a year or so later.

Play activities of an aggressive sort can considerably help to give the child safe outlets for his destructive feelings. Once cleanliness training is established, sand play is excellent as construction and destruction follow each other so fast in this material. Before this time its messy nature is too likely to encourage the child's love of messy things and so work against his efforts to be clean. Drums and sticks, banging toys, hammer toys, paper tearing, and especially the destruction of cartons and boxes are all valuable.

Pets for the two-year-old are dubiously valuable. He is much too likely to treat a cat or a dog as he would another child. In fact young children seem to find a very close similarity between animals and themselves and it is best to postpone the keeping of pets until there is more assurance and stability in the child's social relationships.

The first two years are very rich in growth and change. The child gives up his first instinctive interests slowly as he can replace them by pleasure in perception and movement. In the second year his activities integrate themselves by slow stages into occupations, with a steady

realization of the nature of the materials he handles, though he is still a long way from accepting the inevitable frustrations which these materials place on his plans and wishes. So it is too with people and other children. There is a certain realization of how they please and thwart him, and he has begun to face the frightening problem of his two-mindedness about them; his simultaneous liking and disliking. Already he knows the satisfaction of being one in a known group, and in most cases something of the desolation of being taken away from his stronghold within the family group. The impact of reality on his wishes in part to satisfy them and in part to deprive them of satisfaction is being felt and understood a great deal. He has even learned to take some account in advance and in a very small domain of what experience begins to teach him will be the result of action. All these processes go on in a widening field and with an added complexity for many years. The process will only be finished when he has learned to make some kind of stable working synthesis between his wishes and the discipline of reality. We can only help him in the years that follow to make an acceptance of discipline which is adequate without being rigid.

## CHAPTER III

### PHYSICAL HEALTH

It is necessary to state at the beginning of this chapter that the method of classifying phases of growth as physical, mental, emotional and so on, is adopted for the sole purpose of aiding understanding of a complex process. Nature knows nothing of such antithetical distinctions. The child grows as a whole for he is an organism in which all parts work together. As the body grows and becomes more complex, behaviour assumes pattern and organization, for the mind is part of the growing organism. Thus in his earliest months the child becomes capable of behaviour in specific ways by "growing" rather than by "learning."

Good body growth and protection from ill-health are thus of the first importance. Consideration of pre-natal life is beyond the scope of this book, but reference must be made, in passing, to the importance of the mother's health and nutrition before the child is born. The good growth of the foetus depends upon it. If her nutrition is inadequate, skeletal growth and the formation of teeth will be adversely affected, though this may not be apparent for many years.

#### THE RHYTHM OF GROWTH

In the first year of life growth is most rapid, the child doubles his weight in the first six months and trebles it in the year. This is the first springing up period. The next occurs between five and seven years of age when the child grows long of limb and exchanges the "chubbiness of babyhood for the family countenance."<sup>1</sup> The third

<sup>1</sup> Harris : *Appendix Infant and Nursery Schools*. Report of Consultative Committee, 1933. H.M. Stationery Office.

springing up period begins at about eleven and brings with it the many changes associated with puberty. In the filling out stages which occur—the first between one and five years of age—the other between seven and eleven—growth in size, though continuous is less rapid. These periods appear to provide an opportunity for recovery from the great expenditure of energy in the preceding springing up period, for consolidating and gaining command of the growth brought about in it.

This variation in the rate of growth is true also of different parts of the body, all of which do not grow at the same rate. Certain parts, vital to the organism as a whole, such as heart, brain, nervous system, grow rapidly. Other parts, such as bones and muscles, more slowly. Nature has protected her "master tissues" well; they resist the effects of disease and starvation and are hard to damage. But when they are hurt the effect is lasting and the child does not grow out of damage to the heart, eye, ear, nervous system as he is able to grow out of damage to the slow-growing tissues, bones and muscles, and to an extent, to the lymphoid tissues. These are quick to show ill effects and quick in their recovery in suitable, health-giving conditions. There is noticeable improvement to rickets and other signs of malnutrition in better conditions of life in a nursery school.

#### SUSCEPTIBILITY TO ILLNESS

Susceptibility to the influences of a good or bad environment is greatest in periods of most rapid growth, and in the springing up periods in particular. In fact throughout the first seven years—for growth is rapid during the whole period of early childhood—the child requires the greatest care to enable him to grow well and to escape the many illnesses to which he is particularly prone. The nature of these illnesses varies at different ages. During the first year of life, especially in the first

months of it, the child is immune from many infections that may attack him later, but is very susceptible to nutritional infections and malnutrition. Very great progress has been made both in reducing infant mortality and in preventing ill-health among young children, through the splendid work done by the child-welfare services. The influence of these services has been far-reaching, spreading beyond the poor districts to which they were originally directed and reaching mothers in all types of homes. Toddler clinics, home visiting and other aspects of this work have been warmly supported to an extent that promises well for the future. Unsatisfactory social conditions still, however, exist which, in various areas, hinder progress. So long as these remain, improvement in the health of the children of pre-school age will continue to be hampered, unless they are able to attend a nursery school, or well-organized nursery class. The drive towards new and better housing should do much to mend matters and to remove the barrier now blocking the way to the full attainment of the goal of the child-welfare services.

The infections to which children are particularly susceptible between one and five are measles, whooping-cough, scarlet fever, diphtheria, and these illnesses, coming as they do at a time when the child needs all his vitality for the important business of growing, are a menace. They impoverish growth and leave after-effects that are serious.

During this critical stage in life, from a health point of view, children need four essentials.

1. Conditions that promote and foster good growth and health.
2. Protective care against accidents and illness.
3. Regular medical inspection.
4. Prompt treatment of maladies, defects and tendencies towards ill-health.

The Nursery School is devised to secure this four-fold service for children. To a lesser extent nursery classes do so also, but as yet few of them make complete provision either in regard to conditions of growth, or frequent medical inspection.

### CONDITIONS OF GOOD GROWTH

If the child is to grow well his body tissues must be built up and their wear and tear replaced. The whole body and all its parts must be kept in good condition, at normal temperature and energy must be generated both for the process of growing and for meeting the demands of life. In a word, the child must be well nourished. The principal factors in nutrition are food, water, elimination of waste, fresh air, sleep, activity, warmth and psychological well-being. Each is important and the lack of any tends to produce malnutrition. When the harmony between them is broken disease is an almost inevitable result.

Food is most important of all; particularly for the very young, as without it growth cannot be maintained. It has a threefold function: to promote growth and replace used-up tissue; to supply heat and energy and to regulate the activities of the organs.

Before the war, malnutrition was widespread, and though it is unlikely that any child went hungry, many were unsuitably fed and were thus ill-nourished. If it were possible to diagnose malnutrition in its early stages, something could have been done to correct it. Unfortunately, such diagnosis is not possible and much of it went undetected until it had become severe. This unhappy state of affairs was largely caused by ignorance of food values and the habit of foolish spending on food of little nutritive value, such as sweets and cakes. It was also partly the result of poverty, the most suitable foods being beyond the purchasing power of many a slender



purse. The inadequate provision for the storing or preparation of food being characteristic of most simple homes only added to the difficulty of the situation.

Nutritional standards rose during the war when, in consequence of rationing and price control, numbers of people were better fed than they had ever been. At the same time, the education of the public and the propaganda adopted by the Ministry of Food helped to make people conscious of differences in food values, and taught them the best way to preserve these values in cooking.

The introduction of meals and milk in all schools now operative and other measures of reform should do much towards ensuring good growth to both boys and girls, though school meals cannot do more than add to well-planned home meals and can never replace them.

Meals in nursery schools and classes should be planned in relation to the child's whole day diet, and this is one of the ways in which close collaboration with parents is desirable. It is as unsatisfactory for the child who has a solid breakfast at home to consume another on entering the school as it is for him to be underfed. It is possible gradually to win the co-operation of the parents and to balance the child's diet well between food taken at home and at school. This is already done in some schools.

#### A GOOD DIET

What constitutes a good diet? This question, if broadcast, would bring many answers. Food faddists abound, basing their beliefs sometimes on insufficient knowledge, sometimes on prejudice, and there is much misleading propaganda in advertisements of patent foods. There is inadequate data on which to make categorical statements as to the ideal diet. Possibly it varies for each person, for personal likes and constitutional differences must be considered, yet some general principles have

emerged from the widespread research on the subject. It is generally accepted that a good mixed diet is essential. Such a diet consists of nitrogenous (protein) foods to build the tissues; non-nitrogenous (fats and carbohydrates) to produce heat and energy; water; mineral salts, that are important individually for bone and teeth formation, as well as in their relation to one another, and also those accessory factors known as vitamins.

Vitamins now recognized as essential food factors and mineral salts are contained in the protective foods, such as: milk, and all milk products, eggs, fish, meat, especially liver, fresh uncooked vegetables such as carrots, lettuces, green cabbage, beets and fruit, particularly oranges and tomatoes. Tinned foods, so largely used because of the simplification of life they provide, are often lacking in the protective factors found in the foods enumerated above, though as a source of protein and fat they may be adequate. The addition of a pint of milk and an orange to a child's usual daily diet would ensure enough of these protective factors though they do not in themselves constitute a full or adequate diet for body-building, nor provide the variety of diet so essential for health.

Milk is the most useful food to add to a child's diet as it provides animal protein necessary for growth, animal fats necessary for bone and teeth formation, and the protective factors at the least possible cost. Little children cannot, however, consume the large quantity of milk necessary for the amount of fat required and not less than one ounce per day of butter should be included in the daily diet. As the expense of one pint of milk and one ounce of butter per day per child is as a rule impossible for families with small incomes, cod liver oil should be provided in schools. Some doctors recommend cod liver oil daily for all children from November to March.

A necessary accompaniment of the provision of a good

diet is the cultivation for a taste for suitable food. This has often to be acquired in the nursery school if children have previously been unsuitably fed. Small quantities of disliked food—which is sometimes milk—should be given at first and gradually increased as dislike is overcome. This soon happens when the children get used to a new flavour and see other children relishing it. But to force them to drink large quantities of milk or eat food they do not want is not likely to create an appetite for it and usually creates other difficulties. Tripe, often refused by children who do not think it a “proper dinner” because it is white, becomes acceptable if served with a brown sauce. Liver is often unpopular but is eaten with enjoyment as mince, and milk puddings become irresistible when by adding a little cocoa they can be called “chocolate pudding.” Because of the importance of learning to masticate well meat should not be cut up so fine as to make hard chewing unnecessary. Baked bread rusks make a good item in diet but they should not be served with milk or with stews as children tend to soak them and so rob them of their benefit. It is also wise to avoid mixing the vegetables with the meat and gravy when serving, as this prevents children from discovering the taste of each which is excellent sense training.

Suitable menus for the twenty-four hours, and for nursery school meals are available. Students are referred to the diet pamphlet published by the Nursery School Association and to the many good diet pamphlets published by the Ministry of Food.

#### ELIMINATION OF WASTES

Food to be of value must be well digested, that is to say so changed that it can be absorbed and assimilated. A satisfactory elimination of wastes is essential and is

facilitated by suitable food. Constipation is, generally speaking, evidence of faulty diet and can be corrected by the right one, provided the habit of regular bowel action has been well established and the child has a reasonable amount of exercise, and also that psychological disturbance is not the cause. There should be close co-operation between teachers and parents in ensuring that every child has a proper bowel action at least once per day. This is of vital importance and the teacher should make it her duty to see that a daily evacuation takes place.

#### WATER

Some wastes are carried off by the lungs in the form of gases in expired air, others in water, which is one of the reasons why the body needs a considerable amount of water daily. "Water is the vehicle which conveys essential nutrients to all parts of the body, the medium in which all the chemical action of the body takes place, the solvent in which wastes are removed from the body. More than a quart a day of water as such is needed for proper nutrition."<sup>1</sup> This need not be all taken in the actual drinking of water. A certain amount should be drunk daily—few people drink enough water—but the rest is absorbed in food, fresh salad, fruit and in other beverages. There should be a set time for water drinking in every nursery school or class. Lack of bladder control is frequently caused by inadequate drinking. Concentrated urine irritates the bladder and makes voluntary control difficult, though with the drinking of sufficient water the irritation subsides. Water is discharged from the body through the kidneys for the removal of waste, through the skin as perspiration to regulate temperature, as well as in every breath. The actual loss is considerable and must be made up.

<sup>1</sup> R. McCarrison: *Nutrition and National Health*. (Food Education Society.)

## SLEEP

Throughout life sleep plays an important part in maintaining health and vigour by its restorative effect on all bodily functions and is, in some respects, as essential as food. It is possible for an adult to live for weeks without food and many have done so. No one can live for many days without sleep, and so strong is nature's need of it that the time comes when people cannot remain awake and fall asleep while continuing mechanical activities such as motoring or route marches. There are many theories which purport to explain the cause of sleep and numerous observations have been carried out to determine the changes in the body that it produces. Suffice it to state here that children during their growing years require a great deal more sleep than the majority get.

Modern life that has brought many conveniences to adults has robbed children of both good sleep and a sufficiency of it. Noise from traffic, from the use of mechanical implements and wireless is unceasing during the day and continues far into the night. Daylight saving, cinemas and other cheap forms of entertainment shorten bedtime hours, and there seems to be not merely ignorance but also widespread apathy in ensuring for children all the sleep they need if growth and health are to be satisfactory.

Despite numerous observations and experiments there is not yet sufficient data to indicate either the actual amount of sleep essential at different ages or whether there may be unfavourable results from loss of sleep which do not show until later in life. Yet taking Nature as a guide, observations made by many parents suggest that the two-year-old requires about twelve-thirteen hours of sleep—eleven at night and a daytime nap of one and three-quarter hours. The daily nap should shorten gradually in succeeding years and disappear by

six, though the length of the night sleep shows little diminution during the same period or in fact up to seven or eight years of age.

The quality of night sleep is very much improved in children who have a daytime nap, and the soundness of sleep is as important as the length of it. Sleep can be hampered by digestive upsets, by emotional tension, by stuffy air, heat or cold. Children should go to bed happy, be warmly wrapped and if not entirely out of doors, the room in which they sleep should be very airy.

Good sleep habits should be established early in life. The infant spends most of his time asleep for " 'tis his nature to." As the child grows the many distractions and excitements that surround him are disturbing, unless the habit of regular bed and naptime are formed and never interrupted. Children cannot be made to go to sleep, and over-solicitude on the part of adults in regard to this hampers more than it helps. The nursery school or class can help to cultivate the sleep habit. The force of public opinion is strong and where everybody lies down without question the custom is quickly accepted. It is sometimes necessary for the teacher to sit near a new or timid child until the habit is formed to give him assurance and a sense of protection.

A word about the sleeping position is necessary. Children should lie practically on their "tummies" with head towards one side. Unfortunately many children before coming to the Nursery have acquired the bad habit of sleeping on their backs. When they do so without a pillow the mouth opens, the tongue falls to the back of the throat, and nose-breathing is restricted. This leads to the habit of mouth-breathing which encourages the enlargement of adenoids, and in cases of chronic catarrh this condition is aggravated by sleeping on the back. Children who have a fixed habit of sleeping on the back or who have catarrh should be given a low pillow. This

should be thoroughly dried and the pillow case washed frequently. Children who lie in the correct position do not require a pillow, and as they grow older they tend more to lie on their sides.

#### OPEN AIR

The value of open-air life is more fully realized to-day since the evidence of the remarkable standard of health and growth of children in open-air schools is available and can be compared with those who are brought up indoors. The disadvantage of indoor life is not, as was once believed, due to the chemical composition of the air, as changes in oxygen and carbon dioxide content are not sufficient to be of much physiological concern even in the worst conditions of ventilation. Temperature, humidity and air movement are the important factors in comparison with which the chemical composition is of little moment.

In occupied rooms, particularly if they are crowded and ill-ventilated, humidity is increased by the expiration of hot moist air, and the evaporation of perspiration from the skin. The air is practically stationary and becomes heated and "stuffy." Hot humid air surrounding the body prevents the normal loss of body heat and this brings about lassitude and discomfort. Because the air is practically stationary, droplet infection spread by the sneezing and coughing of infected people is readily picked up by children already less vigorous as a consequence of indoor conditions. Thus colds with resulting catarrh, tonsils, adenoids and consequent defects of hearing are all more likely to occur.

In open-air conditions, the temperature and humidity of the air are kept down and as it is always in motion, infection is quickly dispersed and the body is surrounded by moving fresh air which induces vigour and liveliness. Open-air schools are thus most suitable for children in ill

health, and there is an increasing demand for them for all growing children. From their inception, nursery schools have been of the open-air type, thanks mainly to the work of Rachel and Margaret McMillan. If children are to reap the full value of open-air life, however, they must be protected against loss of normal body heat, must be well fed and warmly clad. If his body temperature is normal, exposure to cold air has an invigorating influence, producing a desire for vigorous activity and the effect is health-promoting. But if the child is cold he gradually becomes colder, miserable and loses vigour. With a chilly body resistance is reduced and the child becomes readily susceptible to infection. It is believed by American authorities that chilling causes constriction of the blood vessels of the palate, tonsils and throat, which is accompanied by a fall in temperature of these tissues, and that the anaemic condition thus produced plays a part in the inception of the common cold and other respiratory disorders.

Children's clothing should be warm and light. The nursery school should provide suitable garments for those who are too thinly clad or unsuitably clad in short dresses or trousers. Woven wool rompers or ski-suits are suitable for both boys and girls and, in addition to keeping children warm, they are less hampering and safer for climbing and vigorous play than ordinary garments.

Open-air life gives opportunity for sunshine to be fully enjoyed. Only those who live outdoors know how much there is of it even in the winter months when hardly a day passes without an occasional gleam. The effect on people of all ages is immediate, spirits rise and with joy come liveliness and vigour—all health promoting. From a physiological point of view, sunshine is of value in stimulating the formation in the skin of vitamin D—ergosterol. This vitamin plays an important part in



aiding the body to utilize the calcium and phosphorus in food for the formation of bones and teeth.

Thus sunshine is particularly important in growing years. In winter, when sunshine is rare, artificial sunlight is available in clinics and hospitals. Unfortunately the valuable properties of sunlight are reduced after passing through smoky, dust-laden air. In districts where such conditions prevail good food, especially fat, is thus doubly essential.

Excessive exposure to the sun in summer may nevertheless be harmful owing to the effect of the heat rays which tend to penetrate the tissues and increase body temperature. Exposure to the glare is equally harmful. Both should be avoided; they lead to headache, irritability and sickness.

#### WARMTH

The normal temperature of the human body is dependent upon a satisfactory food supply. Where this is not forthcoming and the body is ill-nourished, it is fatiguing and actually harmful to attempt to keep warm by exaggerated activity. An open-air school should, therefore, be adequately warmed, especially if the majority of the children are insufficiently nourished or poorly clad. Where this is not done, such an active life has to be arranged in order to keep them warm that the end of the day witnesses a regrettable over-fatigue. It is lamentable if all sedentary occupations have to be abandoned because the temperature is too low for them. Opinions differ as to the most suitable room temperature. Speaking generally it should not exceed  $65^{\circ}$  F. or be less than  $60^{\circ}$  F.

#### ACTIVITY

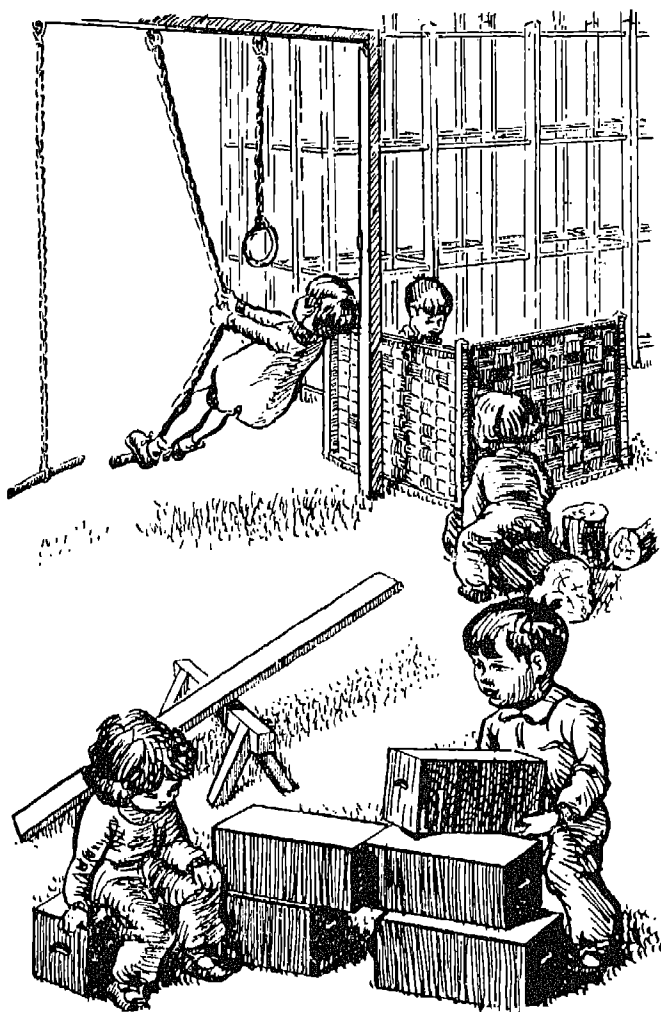
Activity is necessary for the good functioning of body, respiration, circulation, digestion and excretion. Children need no inducement to be active, for it is a normal feature

of healthy childhood and arises spontaneously. Much can and should be done in the nursery school to direct it along channels that lead both to the development of the larger muscles and to co-ordination and control. It has been truly said that most city dwellers are physically illiterate, ignorant of the A B C of good body movement whether standing, sitting, walking or running. This is the consequence of cramped conditions that do not permit of free movement. The nursery school must provide space indoors and out where children can run freely and energetically, in addition to toys and occupations that stimulate a variety of movement of the whole body and co-ordination of the muscles of legs, arms, back and abdomen. Running, climbing, swinging by the arms, jumping, throwing, digging, lifting and carrying cumbersome objects, pushing and pulling—all bring large muscles into play. Target games, balancing on painted lines or raised planks, all such activities call for control of movement. Again the exercises of practical life, such as dusting, polishing, setting tables, and play with manipulative toys also necessitate controlled movement, and bring about co-ordination of the smaller muscles of wrist and hands. The young child uses his shoulder rather than his wrist and should not be urged to exercise the finer muscles.

Though children normally tend to regulate their activities, and alternate active and sedentary pursuits when playing alone, this does not always occur in schools because children stimulate one another. The teacher must be watchful and prevent them from becoming over-fatigued or overheated in such situations.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

The child cannot grow well unless he is happy, knowing that he is loved, wanted, protected and safe. Unsatisfactory emotional states can hinder physical growth.



Outdoor Play Material



There is an old saying, "A happy child is a healthy child." It is true, and it is also true that unhappiness, from whatever cause it springs—fear, a feeling of insecurity, loneliness, jealousy or over-indulgence and spoiling—may hamper physical growth by reason of the nervous tension or listlessness it induces. Unhappy emotional states prevent the child from getting full nutritive value from his food and rob sleep of that peacefulness and abandonment that are its most health-giving and growth-promoting qualities. They cause timidity and a tendency to shrink from life, in place of self-reliant adventurousness and the spontaneous joy and laughter that accompany spirited play. Furthermore, it is well known that children who are emotionally dependent or inharmoniously developed, often make themselves ill in order to get the love and continuous attention that their ill health and dependence awaken in others. Arrested development and reversion to infantile states are often due to causes that are psychological and not physical in origin.

#### PROTECTIVE CARE

The provision of good conditions for growth and health is the first essential, but it does not represent the extent of adult responsibility. There are two classes of danger from which young children must be protected as far as is possible, accidents and illness. The toll of accidents in homes and streets is high, most of them caused by the spontaneity of a child's movements, his inquiring attitude of mind and inexperience of the dangers around him. Apart from the loss of life and injuries caused by swiftly moving traffic which is heavier among children under seven than in any other section of the community, the young child meets with many accidents in the home, from playing with dangerous substances or tools, climbing upon unstable objects, eating and drinking poisonous things. In an ordinary household it is

difficult to protect children adequately, if they have not their own quarters, for the very objects, such as fire, hot water, knives and other sharp instruments, that are a source of danger to them are essential for adults. It is most important for the child to play naturally without sense of fear, and the nursery school provides a place of safety in which he can be venturesome and inquiring without danger.

Infections are another source of danger. It is not so easy to guard the child from these, but much can be done. Parents should be encouraged wherever possible to have their children immunized against diphtheria, the benefits of which treatment are happily more appreciated every day. But the situation is still unsatisfactory and teachers should take an active part in making the importance of immunization more widely known. Recently, inoculation against whooping-cough has been more adopted and more successful though, unfortunately, the same cannot be said in cases of measles. So far, methods of immunization against measles are not yet fit for general use.

The responsibility of collecting children together at a time of life when they are very susceptible to infection calls for great vigilance on the part of the teacher to ensure that no case of infection be inadvertently admitted. Every nursery school or class should have its isolation room and as each child is examined on entry, any one under suspicion should be isolated until passed by a competent authority. Any child who develops suspicious symptoms during the day should be similarly treated. This necessitates teachers being knowledgeable about health and capable of detecting symptoms of illness; listlessness, pallor, loss of appetite, restlessness in sleep, feverishness should be immediately investigated. Every teacher should also know how to take a temperature accurately—a child's normal temperature is 98.4° F.—

and how to recognize early symptoms of measles, whooping-cough and other infectious illnesses, as well as of localized infections—sores, ringworm, etc.

#### SPREAD OF INFECTION

Infection is spread in three ways—by air, by contact or by food. There is always a risk of air-borne infection where people are gathered together, but this risk is very much reduced under open-air conditions. In the constantly moving air and space, infection is dispersed instead of being collected as happens in indoor buildings especially if hot and stuffy.

The child playing in the street is safer than in an indoor building with other children, as far as air-borne infection is concerned. The child in an open-air school is safer than either, and by quick diagnosis and immediate isolation of early cases it is possible to reduce the severity of an epidemic. Open-air buildings must be kept open and teachers should themselves be conditioned to this way of life during their training, if their previous schooling has not already done so. Where nursery classes are conducted in temporary quarters by utilizing unrequired rooms in infant schools, until structural alterations have been made, the teacher should see that windows are always wide open and the air kept moving.

It would be more satisfactory if children suffering from colds could be excluded. The common cold is the cause of much suffering and spreads rapidly. It is not however classed as notifiable and teachers must therefore take such care as they can to protect children from one another. Paper handkerchiefs, soft in texture so as not to be hurtful, such as facial tissue which can be obtained in rolls, should be used and burned immediately. Beds should be spaced widely, and if in rows, the head of one should be in line with the foot of the next. Sleeping conditions should always be kept as airy as possible.

## LOCAL INFECTION

Ringworm, suppurating sores or other local infections which are spread by contact should be kept covered and properly treated. The child with an unprotected sore in an infectious condition on leg or hand who plays in the paddling-pool or with moist clay can be a source of danger to many. Special care must be taken in cases of diarrhoea which is highly infectious. Soiled garments must be removed immediately and put into disinfectant and any chair, floor or other object that has been soiled must not only be washed but thoroughly disinfected. After a visit to lavatory the child's hands must be thoroughly washed, and a child with this complaint should be sent home if possible, or otherwise isolated, for the spread of this most dangerous condition is likely unless rigorous care is taken.

Unless every child is examined periodically and is known to be free from vermin, dressing-up games in which child after child uses the same wraps and headgear may be a source of trouble. If however the teacher is thoroughly trained for her work and vigilant *the risk of infection in nursery schools should be very slight*. As the child will not be so well protected throughout the rest of his schooling or during his life he should be trained in hygienic habits, and taught never to use any but his own towel, comb, tooth-brush, drinking-cup, handkerchief, etc., while in the nursery school.

Responsibility for the health and safety of children is heavy and necessitates the employment of qualified women as teachers whose training has made them knowledgeable about health, quick to recognize early symptoms of illness and skilful in rendering first aid. In this work such qualifications are indispensable.

A properly equipped first aid cabinet, hung well out of the children's reach, should be a feature in every



nursery school or class. It should contain antiseptics such as hydrogen peroxide and dettol; witch hazel, gauze, lint, cotton wool and bandages. A clinical thermometer should also be included as well as tweezers for removing splinters, a hot-water bottle, scissors, safety pins and a washing-bowl. Other equipment chosen by the doctor and the nurse can also be kept in this receptacle of which the teacher would naturally keep the key. A daily visit to the nursery school by a school health visitor is desirable.

#### INFECTION IN FOOD

The risk of infection in food is minimized by the care of the Public Health Authorities in regard to water, milk and the general inspection of food. There is nevertheless a certain risk of the spread of such diseases as tuberculosis and intestinal infections. In this connection it is necessary to emphasise the importance of ordering food for the nursery school day by day and to avoid storage on the premises. The origin of outbreaks of intestinal infections in nurseries has been traced to stored food of different kinds including meat extracts and gravy. If it is quite impossible to obtain all food fresh daily a refrigerator is necessary. Fresh food is better.

#### HEALTH TRAINING

Health training should include such habits as regularity in water drinking, in elimination, in sleep and outdoor activity. It should also create an appetite for plain, simple, good food. Training in cleanliness of person is a feature of nursery days, and by means of their small bowls and freedom to wash themselves, children become interested in, and eager for, this necessary feature of civilized life to which they offer so much resistance at the hands of "nannies" or adults who try to scrub them.

Learning to blow the nose and keep it clear takes time and patience but must be persisted in. Tooth-brushing has been a usual feature in the Nursery School, but there are many to-day who question the suitability of it. It contributes little to the condition of the teeth which is secured by means of diet. When healthy, teeth are covered with a protective enamel that is the hardest substance known. Nothing can penetrate it. Infection can be introduced into the gums by tooth-brushes if either so hard as to damage the tissue, or so dirty as to carry infection. If, however, they are used, they should be made of soft bristles, be stored separately in the air but protected from dust and changed frequently. It is preferable to buy cheap brushes (provided the bristles are firmly inserted) so that they can be frequently renewed.

Face washers are of questionable utility. The natural process is to wash with one's own hand and it is good training to do so. Children do not always use face washers exclusively for the purpose intended and unless carefully supervised, which is impossible if numbers are large, they may be used to clean shoes or to wipe up the floor. Children are moreover apt to suck the water from them. Under these circumstances it is better to dispense with them altogether.

#### MEDICAL INSPECTION AND TREATMENT

Frequent medical inspection is necessary in early years because health is variable and changes are sudden. In the nursery school this is well provided for. Doctors come often to examine the children and can be consulted at any time.

Prompt treatment of ill health and defects is as important as quick detection, and in the matter of treatment children of school age have in the past been better provided for, on the whole, than younger ones. Nursery School teachers should be well informed and up to date

on all facilities available for the care and treatment of young children in their area and ready to pass on this helpful information to the mothers with whom their work brings them in contact. Many of these mothers do not understand the importance of early treatment for minor ailments. Help in taking children to hospital or treatment centres can usually be enlisted from care committee workers.

#### SUPPORT OF MOTHERS

To enlist the support and co-operation of the mothers is a necessary part of any health service. This is one of the strongest features of the local authority welfare services, and the training that mothers obtain there in the care of infants is of the best. The nursery school has an opportunity of carrying this excellent training a step further. The enlistment of the mothers' co-operation in using to the full the health services available is an important part of nursery school work. So important is it that this part of the work should be recognized as necessitating extra staff, to be paid for out of moneys allocated for adult education. In securing the children's good health and growth, mothers and teachers must work together, helping one another and adopting a united aim and method in all they do. Only thus is it possible for every young child to lay the foundation of good health.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTELLIGENCE

THE new-born babe is a helpless little creature, barely conscious of or responsive to his surroundings and dependent for his very existence upon other people. Yet within the course of three or four years he is walking and talking, using eyes, ears and hands in active exploration of his social and material world, and adjusting himself intelligently and resourcefully to the many demands it makes upon him.

What factors bring about this amazing change from helplessness to independence, carrying the individual onward towards thought, reason and creative power? The true inwardness of the development of intelligence and of personality has still to be discovered. Much is known, but that much is little compared with the vast unknown. "Man is not an easy subject to study. He is the most mysterious of all Nature's productions, more mysterious even than matter, and that is mysterious enough. We don't understand him by studying his psychology alone. . . . His psychology is important but if that is all we know about him we know very little. Man is much more than a psychological performance. His roots go down to the depths of the universe and into the depths of time; he is a child of the stars as Plato said."<sup>1</sup>

### THE EARLY STAGES

It is not easy to say at what moment the infant first becomes conscious of his surroundings, capable of attention and of adaptation. Some of the earliest reactions to

<sup>1</sup>L. P. Jacks. Broadcast Lecture, February, 1938. "Relation of Morals to Scientific Progress."

outward stimuli are reflex, but very early in life his behaviour shows that his responses belong to the realm of intelligence. Even sucking, which is at first reflex and can be stimulated by touching the child in different parts of his body, soon comes under his control. As early as two weeks he does not begin to suck until the nipple is actually in his mouth. This is an instance of adaptive behaviour. Many actions during the first months of life indicate this kind of behaviour. The child's attention is attracted by the sound of his mother's voice, and he turns his head in the direction from which the voice comes. He will follow a moving light with his eyes, or turn his head towards it.

There is no definition of intelligence that is universally accepted, but the difference that exists between those most widely held is chiefly one of emphasis. Binet describes it as the power of mental adaptation characterized by a tendency to take and maintain a definite direction, the capacity to make adjustments, and the power of auto-criticism. Hazlitt defines it as a problem-solving organization of the mind; Gesell as adaptive behaviour.

In its earliest phases, intelligence depends for its development on bodily growth and health. When these are normal intelligence progresses in an orderly sequence that is unchangeable. "The lawfulness of psychological growth expresses itself as a tendency towards patterning which human behaviour displays. All behaviour is obedient to pattern; even the random movements of a month old child are not utterly fortuitous. There is indeed no such thing as randomness in infant behaviour. Accordingly the "random activity" of the two months' infant is distinct from that of the twelve months old. It is distinctive because it has its own pattern."<sup>1</sup>

When the body is developing normally and healthily

<sup>1</sup> Gesell: *Mental Growth of the Pre-School Child*.

the child is stimulated by its changing needs to be active in divers ways. His movements are at first impulsive, waving his arms, kicking his legs, crowing, gurgling and later seizing objects in one hand or the other. These actions are performed without conscious aim or purpose. Each and all of them help to establish and develop neuro-muscular co-ordination and prepare for more complicated activity, such as the power of using both hands simultaneously. Physical activity and the increasing complexity of the child's movements prepare what might be regarded as the machinery used by the intelligence for its functioning, which is a network of nervous connections within the brain. The brain itself grows very rapidly. According to Pfister it doubles its initial weight during the first year and trebles it before the end of the third year. Karl Bühler believes that this rapid brain growth is "primarily to be connected with the perfecting of bodily movement which probably takes the lion's share of the increase and weight."<sup>1</sup> It is, in any case, the areas controlling movement that develop first, and through these it is possible for other areas, concerned with the higher intellectual processes—thought, reason, imagination—to develop. The brain continues to grow in size until about the end of the fifth year, and that of a seven-year-old child "presents an arrangement of cells and fibres in the cortex which cannot be distinguished from that of the adult."<sup>2</sup>

The development of intelligence is affected by three strong influences: inherent capacity, physical growth, health and experience.

### INHERITED CAPACITY

Do intelligence and the different qualities of the psychic

<sup>1</sup> K. Bühler: *Mental Development of the Child*. Kegan Paul Trench Trubner and Co., Ltd.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix by H. H. Harris: *Infant and Nursery Schools*. Report of Consultative Committee, 1933.

life develop from sources within the child or are they the result of outward influence? Is it nature or nurture, inheritance or environment that plays the major part in development?

Whatever may be the answer to that question, it is obvious that neither can operate alone. This is true of all growing things. An acorn cannot grow into an oak without soil, though it may make valiant efforts and put forth shoots and roots. Conversely soil without seed cannot produce anything. This is true of the psychic no less than of the physical life. The potentialities that appear spontaneously as the child grows cannot develop into power or skill unless the conditions of the encircling world are helpful. There must be a convergence of both the powerful forces of inheritance and environment. Inherited tendencies, so strongly expressed in early infancy are often modified by environmental influence in the growing years. Early tendencies are "not fixed predestinations of what will happen, but *indications* of the future, surrounded by a wide margin, leaving room for the influence of education and environment in the shaping of growth."<sup>1</sup>

In individual children inherited tendencies are sometimes so strong that they ripen with the minimum help from without, as in cases of rare musical talent or other special ability. In other cases children can be educated only as a result of considerable outward help and encouragement. Intelligence has been called educable capacity and inherited capacity must obviously limit content. "It is impossible for a pint jug to hold more than a pint; it is also impossible for the child's educational attainments to rise higher than his educable capacity permits."<sup>2</sup> No amount of opportunity, education

<sup>1</sup> W. Stern : *Psychology of Early Childhood*. (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.)

<sup>2</sup> C. Burt : *The Backward Child*. (University of London Press.)

or encouragement can improve bad inheritance or inferior stock. Such a heredity may bring with it lack of environmental opportunity and the child of parents who are themselves undeveloped or un-intelligent, is often handicapped threefold.

#### EFFECTS OF HEALTH ON INTELLIGENCE

There is a very close correspondence between physical growth and health and the development of intelligence. Children who grow well and are well nourished, provided their inheritance is satisfactory, are as a rule more intelligent than those who are handicapped in growth by illness or other causes. Poor physique and malnutrition are frequently the causes of backwardness, especially if they occur in the first two or three years of life when the body is being built. Burt is of the opinion that ill health during infancy is one of the most frequent causes of backwardness. He says: "Throughout the first two or three years of life all forms of growth are directly related. An infant's rate of physical development affords a valuable predictive index of his later development intellectually. The child who is backward in walking and talking and even in cutting his teeth is apt to prove backward later on in intellectual progress."<sup>1</sup>

In investigating the cause of backwardness in a group of London children, Burt found that three-quarters of them were suffering from physical conditions. Of the others he found that two-thirds of the children were suffering from social conditions, three-quarters from intellectual difficulties, a third from temperamental difficulties and a sixth from school conditions.

Measurements of a large number of children of the same age in different forms in school were compared by another investigator, and it was found that the average

<sup>1</sup> Burt: *Op. cit.*



height of the children in the highest form was considerably greater than the tallest child in the lower forms.

Blanton made a study of 6,500 German children at the end of the first world war, all of whom showed marked evidence of malnutrition. He noted that they were listless and apathetic; they did not break into activity spontaneously as normal children do; they were inattentive and showed inability to concentrate. On the whole their comprehension was slow, with poor memory and irritability. When playing games they showed lack of muscular co-ordination. Dr. Clement Nicory, who refers to this work of Blanton, states "Statistics tend to show that children of better class parents do better at school than the poorer classes, and I believe that the difference is largely due to inferior nutrition of the latter."<sup>1</sup>

There is indeed no doubt that impoverished growth, however caused, hampers the development of mind among other reasons because of its detrimental effect upon sensory receptivity, so essential a factor in mental development. "The quality of the impressions received by the mind largely depends on the acuity of the senses at any given moment, and on the quality of the impressions very largely depends the quality of mental performance. This is quite a demonstrable fact. The child of good health with all its senses working at the highest pitch of efficiency receives impressions of such vividness and quality as to stimulate its mental functions to the fullest. . . . To the child in poor health impressions always come with drabness and dullness that is incapable of stimulating the mind, or capable of merely stimulating it to such poor effect that the mental performance is never up to what is possible for the child."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Clement Nicory, Chief Assistant, Physico-Therapy Department, St. Thomas Hospital, in a Lecture in London.

<sup>2</sup> Hamilton Pearson: *Minor Physical Disturbances and the Psychological Effects*. Pamphlet published by Home and School Council.

The importance of good physical growth in early years cannot therefore be over-emphasized. Character, happiness and intelligence all depend upon it and, even allowing for the astonishing recuperative powers of children, opportunity if lost during these early years, is apt to be lost for all time.

#### THE EFFECT OF EXPERIENCE

Given satisfactory inheritance and good health the growing child spontaneously indulges in many forms of activity that follow one another in unvarying sequence. These movements, made without conscious purpose are but the starting point of intelligence which is dependent on satisfactory experience if it is to develop.

Though the child at first seizes objects indiscriminately and plays with them without purpose, he soon begins to look at and become interested in the objects he clutches. He becomes aware of his activity and what he can do with the things he holds. He examines them, places them carefully, noting what happens to them as a result of his handling, and this introduces a new element into his activity. It becomes thoughtful instead of being merely impulsive. He begins to attend to what he is doing, and by perceiving the consequence of his actions, to learn by experience, and to develop his intelligence. From now on, though the nature of the child's activity is to an extent determined by his stage of physical development, experience exercises an increasing influence on intellectual growth. This arises from the child's reaction both to stimuli coming from without and impulses born within. He has to adapt himself to both and to build up a form of behaviour that gradually becomes suitable for the occasion. Intelligence is the light that guides this adaptive behaviour, and as such, is present in every aspect of the child's life, in skilful and controlled bodily movement, in social and emotional

behaviour, in all mental processes. It is itself an expression of his personality and cannot be separated from it.

The power to focus attention, essential in the development of intelligence, is strengthened when, with increasing neuro-muscular co-ordination, the child succeeds in using both hands simultaneously and conjointly. This new skill marks a big step forward, as it enables him to bring two things together, to compare and contrast them and to place them in relationship inside, or on top of one another. Looking at things, feeling them, hammering them together—such acts as these are the beginning of experimental play that persists throughout childhood and becomes more and more complex as the child grows. It involves the use and exercise of all aspects of mental activity, for when the child begins to compare and contrast things he begins to think about them. At first he is only able to recognize strong contrasts or similarities, but with experience, and as his perceptive powers are exercised by play, he becomes capable of distinguishing similarities and contrasts that are less obvious, and his critical and reasoning powers are quickened. As play becomes more experimental and objects are put to more varied uses, all mental activities used in thinking such as, attention, concentration, observation, memory, reason, judgment, deduction, etc., are called into action. The child quite spontaneously begins to use his intelligence in all these ways very early in his life and with increasing power and profit if experience is favourable.

Experience, which plays so strong a part in the development of intelligence, is very limited in infancy when the child is incapable of independent movement, and has to wait for things to come to him. As soon as he learns to walk and to talk, however, his environment and the possibilities of experience are enormously widened. Independence and opportunity to investigate his surroundings that walking gives, and the wider social

contacts made possible by speech, are both very stimulating, so that between two and five the intelligence develops rapidly. A slowing down of physical growth after the first springing-up period coincides with this time of accelerated psychological development. This quickening of intelligence makes the child very sensitive to influences and impressions which are apt to leave a permanent mark for good or ill. All the basic skills and mental functions appear during the first three or four years and the pattern of the emotional life is established. After this age, growth is in the nature of an elaboration, or modification, of the pattern then established. Though it is possible to change this pattern of life at a later age, it is not easy to do so and, as a rule, it necessitates very special guidance and re-education. Because of his plasticity at this time, it is comparatively easy to "condition" and train the child, but this disposition can be a source of weakness as well as of strength. The way in which this impressionable age can be used, and is being used, in countries where the impersonal "State" is glorified and the human being is sacrificed to it, is well-known. Not only is there an attempt made to prejudice the child's attitude to life and people (fear and hatred being strongly emphasized), but the children are also trained in mechanical habits, routine and behaviour designed to kill the power of individual thought almost before it is born. Those responsible for the care and education of young children should be imbued with respect for human individuality and should believe that there are undiscovered possibilities and potentialities which it is their responsibility to find and to develop. Unless they co-operate with the creative forces which can release those possibilities, pre-school education may be turned into the greatest of all the many forms of cruelty that have been perpetrated upon the defenceless child.

## LEARNING BY LIVING

Potentialities can only mature if given outlet, experience and nurture. The most natural outlet and experience are those that arise in the ordinary process of living. They accustom the child to use and develop himself as an individual and also as a member of the community. Education should be both psychological and sociological, concerned equally with the development of the child's powers and the way in which they are used for the service of others. In the nursery school it is possible to give children experience of everyday life sufficiently simplified to make self-help possible as well as opportunity for caring for one another. It has been a serious weakness of much schooling in that it has been divorced from life and living experience and has been artificial and consequently unnatural, consisting too much of learning facts detached from real situations, for which the child had neither interest nor immediate need. Happily schools, though hampered by tradition, are changing. The nursery school, free from tradition and still largely experimental, has a great opportunity to-day. By establishing a miniature world in which the child can live naturally and fully as an individual and a member of society, all-round education should be secured for him. The way of life should bring about increasing muscular co-ordination and an attitude of independence, resourcefulness and initiative in dealing with everyday situations. In addition to learning to live with others it should include training in habits basic to physical and mental health, such as liking for suitable food, good digestion and elimination, regular relaxation, sleep and personal cleanliness. As Gesell points out these matters are not purely physical. They are ways of living that involve a proper organization of the nervous system. "A child," he writes, "who has not acquired these habits does not

know the first letter in the alphabet of mental health."<sup>1</sup>

Learning by living is possible in the nursery school, only if the organization is wisely planned. Arrangements should be sufficiently unhurried to permit the children to be individually self-reliant—to do things in their own time, which is slow, and in their own way. It ought to be free from set routine that makes for unthinking acceptance of other people's dictation, or that encourages mechanical conduct, and should instead, give each child opportunity and incentive to be self-directing and purposeful in all he does. In learning to do things for himself, to wash and dress, determine his occupation and find the things he needs for it; to put away his toys when he has finished his play; to adjust himself to the needs of others and to live with them in a spirit of good fellowship—in all these activities which arise out of life the child is called upon to use his intelligence to the full. It is an educative way of life. However, such education cannot be achieved if all is hurried and the children are always dealt with in a large group. If such daily occupations as preparing meals, sweeping crumbs, washing and changing shoes are closely supervised by adults, solely in order to hurry them on, which often necessitates helping and sometimes actually doing these things for the children, the value of education is sacrificed to the lower claims of organization. It perpetuates the mistakes of the overworked mother.

#### HAMPERING INFLUENCE OF BADLY PLANNED BUILDINGS

It is much to be regretted that the number of children in each group in most nursery schools is so large—and still more regrettable that the play shelters are so often small and not always self-contained. Each group of children should have its own toilet rooms and play rooms, and also an extra room or porch for sleeping. The claims

<sup>1</sup> Gesell: *Mental Growth of the Pre-School Child*.

of organization loom too large, when toilet rooms are shared with other groups and are not close at hand, and when one room has to serve for play, meals and sleep. The usual result is the sacrifice of the child's real education in the interests of efficient machinery, designed to get through all that must be done without degenerating into chaos. Where each group has its own toilet closely accessible to the play-rooms, it becomes possible instead of a collective expedition at times determined by the teacher, for each individual to go when necessary and the responsibility is given to each child to think for himself as it should be. Yet in spite of the difficulty created by badly planned buildings a thoughtful teacher should be able to devise a régime that will give children time and opportunity to think about the things they do, to plan them themselves, and so help each child to build up the rhythm and pattern of his individual behaviour.

#### EDUCATION BY PLAY

Equally important with living experience is the effect of play on the development of intelligence. Play is the most characteristic activity of this period and by means of it the intelligence is stimulated and exercised, both knowledge and skill are acquired, and the child strengthens his whole personality.

It is by the handling of concrete objects used in play and in experiments with them that the child is stimulated to think and reason, to judge and plan, to originate and invent. "Reasoning depends essentially on the power to perceive logical relations and to relate these in their turn so that they form a coherent whole, a single consecutive argument, valid, consistent and conclusive."<sup>1</sup> In experimental play in which the child tests out the possibilities of play material he does much practical thinking. It is through play, too, that he becomes

<sup>1</sup> Burt: *Op. cit.*

acquainted with the laws and forces that operate in the material world. In such simple play as building a tower and knocking it down, the child "gains some insight into statics, the physics of resistance, the inertia, stability and weight of objects."<sup>1</sup> In the manipulation of varied kinds of play material he learns something of proportion, balance, size, quantity, cause and effect and relationship. "Of course the child himself has no idea of all these educational results which we have deduced from his play. Such an absurdity as that the infant gains any ideas of causes or of cohesion is of course not meant. The immediate result is that the child becomes intimately acquainted with a large number of perceptions, and of the relation between them, and such store of experience in its ever-increasing familiarity, forms a solid foundation on which to build later, a real acquaintance with the world, an understanding of things and of their interrelation. This preparatory work of all play is done out of sight in the twilight of total or semi-consciousness; any verbal formulation must more or less contort such intangible psychic happenings."<sup>2</sup>

The difference between the reasoning of a child and that of an adult is one of degree, not of kind, and is due to the greater experience and intellectual development of the adult and to his stored mind. This gives the adult greater power but not a different power. The central factor of intellectual activity is the ability to bring and relate past experience to present situations, to integrate experiences, and this is characteristic of all thought from the "loftiest flight of genius to simplest manipulative play in the young child: the first organizing act of the child differs in no way from that of the profoundest discovery of the scientist or philosopher."<sup>3</sup> The child, whose experience is comparatively limited, has

<sup>1</sup> Stern: *Op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Stern: *Op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> V. Hazlitt: *Psychology of Infancy*. (Methuen and Co., Ltd.)



a meagre amount of mental material on which to draw, but he uses it in the same way as the adult uses his richer store, and he employs the same methods. The more fully the teacher understands that the nature of the child's intelligence and the way in which he uses it are the same as in the case of the adult, the more ready she will be to respect it, and to give the child opportunities to face and solve his own problems. She will also provide him with sensible toys that make thoughtful play possible, because she will appreciate the child's play at its full value, recognizing that it is to the development of intelligence and personality what food and physical activity are to the growth of the body. Lack of adequate opportunity for play or of suitable play material results in psychic malnutrition, as inevitably as poor food and lack of activity lead to physical impoverishment and weakness.

#### THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE SENSES

All thinking at this early age is done on the perceptual level of consciousness. Between two and five years of age the child is particularly sensitive to perceptual impressions and can learn more by sensory experience than in any other way. Keen eyes, ears and sensitive finger-tips are ever on the alert receiving a variety of perceptions and enriching the mind with a wealth of knowledge. The child who has limited experience for the development of the senses and is in consequence unobservant with eyes, ears and hands is hampered in his intellectual growth. A rich imagination depends on a mind well stored with clear-cut images, and it is important for children to have ample opportunity to touch, see, and hear a great variety of things if mental life is to be vigorous. Abstract reasoning and all the higher processes of thought must rest upon and arise from concrete experience. Both scientific and artistic imagination depend on such suitable experience. Sense training

should therefore be given an important place in early years. In the nursery school it can be given by play-things that awaken and increase perceptual activity by presenting the child with problems that can only be solved through the exercise of precise observation, such as Montessori's cylindrical and geometrical insets and her colour-grading tablets. It can be given also by a well-planned environment. It must, moreover, be emphasized that "careful experiment has shown that what is true of the muscles is not true of the senses. Merely to exercise the senses does not in itself suffice to train them. Indeed after the first few months of life it would appear that the chief need is to teach the child to discriminate what was previously unnoticed or confused. . . . Small differences are unnoticed until they have been repeated in different contexts and have acquired a meaning for the individual child."<sup>1</sup> This calls for good play material. There is improvement in acuity of vision until puberty, of hearing until about seven, of pitch until puberty. Touch discrimination degenerates after about seven due to the thickening of the skin that takes place at about that age. The muscle sense and motor dexterity both continue to improve until adulthood.

The best kind of sense training material is of the type devised by Dr. Montessori. By the problems it interests the child to solve, it keeps him playing, experimenting and repeating the process in a persistent effort to succeed. The deep attention that it awakens and the many times in which every move is repeated combine to bring about ability to make fine discrimination of colour, size, shape, texture, sound, weight. In the process he perceives logical relations and differences, cause and effect and thus equipped he discovers and appreciates the qualities of objects in the environment to which children lacking this experience are as a rule blind and deaf.

Much of the ordinary material available for sense

<sup>1</sup> Consultative Committee Report. The Infant and Nursery School.

training, though it provides opportunity for the use of the senses, does not train children in accurate perception to the same extent as material of the Montessori type. This latter begins by drawing attention to great contrast and simple matching, and leads the child step by step to note differences that become gradually finer and less obvious. He is soon able to differentiate subtle shades of colours, to recognize at a glance slight differences in form such as a decagon from a nonagon, and even objects that vary in size only in millimetres.

Montessori material has another valuable quality. It makes children more interested in the facts and processes it illustrates, than in itself. As soon as the child becomes fully aware of colour, texture, quantity, and so on, the material is discarded as he carries the knowledge and skill gained, into a wider field. Montessori material is often criticized because children so quickly outgrow it and discard it, but that is one of its most useful features. In its action it is like the run on the ground that an aeroplane makes before it soars towards the freedom of the heavens.

Play, enjoyed for its own satisfaction, is always in a sense a preparation for the future, and in play the child practises types of activity that are often not fully developed until later. The pre-speech activity is an instance of this, for the child impulsively plays with sounds, practises them and develops the possibility of speech long before he begins to use words, or to be conscious of speech as a means of communication. The play of a child is "psychologically several stages ahead of his actual development, concerned as it is with experiments illustrating cause and effect, special relationship, statics, mechanical causation, reasoning, judgment, etc. The child does not play to learn, nor with any conscious intention of preparing for the future, of which he is quite unaware. He plays for the enjoyment of it and for

immediate ends. Learning is always a by-product."<sup>1</sup> Doing things over and over again as a child delights to do, gives the practice that makes perfect, and in handling, looking and listening, the mind is stored with impressions out of which the thought life is built.

#### FROM PLAY TO WORK

Towards the end of the pre-school period a change takes place in the character of play. While sensory activity is dominant, the material environment plays an important part in intellectual development; it is the stimulus and starting point of activity. As the child develops in knowledge and skill he becomes less dependent on the environment as a starting point for his activities, more "self-conditioned" and the originator of his schemes. He selects and uses play material with more discrimination, prompted not by the suggestiveness of the things themselves, but by their suitability for carrying out the plans he himself evolves. He looks to his environment not for suggestions as to what he should play with, but for the means by which he can carry out his self-initiated projects. Whereas in early years play is controlled by neither plan nor purpose and is pursued for the immediate satisfaction it provides, at this more developed age, the child has a definite goal in view and works according to plan, thus showing himself capable of abstract thought. The plan, the methods employed and the goal to be reached give play a shape, previously absent, and bring new elements into it. The child exercises will power, persistence and courage as he pursues his goal. Concentration deepens, the span of attention lengthens, and the child is really at work. Play of this nature, for which the child has been preparing himself from the first impulsive movements of infancy, is educative in the fullest sense of the word. It develops

<sup>1</sup> Stern *Op. cit.*

intelligence and character, gives emotional satisfaction and as a rule involves both manual control and dexterity. It does not reach its fullness until about six years of age and it is therefore most desirable for the play life to be continued until the habits of concentration, attention and reasoning, and of planning and forethought that have been forming from babyhood have been strengthened.

In investigating the failures among children in the first grades of the Viennese elementary schools Charlotte Bühler found them, in 80 per cent. of cases, due to the fact that these children had not reached this work attitude in their play. They were immature and unready to fulfil the demands of school.

It is always unsatisfactory to cut short the play life by transition from the informal free play of the nursery school to the organized play of the less progressive infant school as early as five years old. Playful lessons planned to stimulate interest and skill in the three R's can never be as truly educative as self-initiated free play with good play material. In early years the development of general intelligence is far more necessary than the acquisition of special skills.

#### LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT

There is another activity which begins in pre-school years that has an immense influence on the growth of intelligence—the use of speech and language. The discovery that everything has a name coupled with the ability to talk about things gives a spur to experiment and creates the desire for new words. The relationship and inter-dependence of language and thought are very close. The way in which they develop simultaneously is dealt with in chapter VI.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ASSESSMENT OF INTELLIGENCE IN YOUNG CHILDREN

#### HOW DO WE ESTIMATE CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND ABILITY ?

WHENEVER we watch even two or three children of about the same age playing together, we begin to compare one with another. Usually these comparisons are direct :

" Mary is taller than Jean " ; or " Tom is more active than Neville " ; or " Jill makes more noise than all the other four put together."

On the whole, a group of adults will tend to agree in their observations on this simple level, though they may add some qualifying remarks, such as :

" Neville is not himself to-day " ; or " Jill is excited because her daddy is coming home," implying that what can be seen at this moment is not characteristic of the children always.

Sometimes we make more generalized judgments, implying comparison with an outside standard, as when we say :

" They are all very big children, except Jean " ; or " They all talk well for their age " ; or " They are very sensible although Tom is sometimes babyish for a boy of his age."

When this kind of judgment is made, there is often disagreement among the observing adults. One will say :

" But I've seen many children who are much bigger at this age " ; another, " I don't think their speech is very forward ; they use a lot of words but they make little attempt at sentences " ; a third may add, " I don't like noisy children ! "

Frequently, too, discussion of children's present behaviour leads to prediction of their future development :

"Neville will hold his own ; he knows what he wants and doesn't let Tom boss him" ; or "Jill is so anxious to find out about everything ; she's an intelligent child and will go a long way."

It will be seen that in making such comparisons and judgments much depends on :

1. Our general knowledge and experience of children.
2. Our knowledge and experience of other children of the age of those we are observing.
3. Our previous knowledge of these children ("Neville is not himself").
4. The acuteness of our observation ("They don't make sentences").
5. Our attitude to children and their behaviour ("I don't like . . .").

In Nursery and Infant Schools, teachers and others are continually making comparisons and judgments and rightly so. Every teacher wants to be sure that the opportunities provided for all children and the special help given to particular children are meeting their present needs and laying reliable foundations for their future development. Day-to-day observation and deepening knowledge of every member of a class are indispensable, so are an awareness of the pattern of progress and an atmosphere which promotes all-round growth. In her efforts to give children the opportunities and stimulus they need, every teacher is, in a general sense, a child psychologist. But in trying to estimate those needs most adults know only too well that their experience is limited and their standards biased by their knowledge and outlook. Moreover, the very freedom of a good Nursery School and the consequent wide range of activity to be found there, excellent though these conditions are, can be mis-

leading. It is much easier to compare children when they are all doing the same thing, *at* the same time, and *in* the same time, than when they are all busily but diversely occupied in working at their own interests. The writer has noticed that teachers in the more formal type of Infant School are often much more dogmatic about children's abilities than their colleagues working along more modern lines. This is partly because the latter show greater humility and respect for children but partly because the children's achievement in set tasks can be *measured* more exactly.

#### THE NEED FOR STANDARDIZED SCALES

What is needed to help in day-to-day estimates of children's needs and potentialities is some kind of "measuring instrument" which will make these judgments more reliable. No scale is ever likely to be made that will tell us everything about a child, because personality and intelligence are not simple qualities, like height, to be measured along a simple yardstick. The standardized tests and scales to be described below do not take the place of personal observation but they are helpful when teachers set out to compare certain aspects of children's behaviour and development with what appears, from the study of large numbers of children, to be "normal" for their age. They are also a useful corrective to personal bias. Individual judgments are inevitably subjective, coloured to a greater or less extent by feelings. Most people, perhaps, tend to overestimate those they like and to undervalue in some way those who do not appeal. A teacher may over-compensate when she feels sorry for one child and incline to be harsh in her demands and expectations of another who seems to be favoured by fortune. These human reactions to children are not "wrong" but they can be misleading, and, in the long run, are not always in the children's interest.



So, as Dr. Stutsman says : " The most effective tool the child psychologist has is his knowledge of children, subjective though it be ; but this knowledge functions more freely and effectively when it is supplemented by tools which enable the psychologist to determine a child's level of development. Any device that renders real assistance in this problem of determining the level of development is of value, but the cruder and more inaccurate tools are of much less value than the refined and accurate ones. Standardized tests of all types fall into the classification of useful tools."<sup>1</sup>

#### THE PIONEER WORK OF BINET IN FRANCE

Although this is not the place to describe in detail the technique of making scales and tests, it is interesting to note the general unfolding of the idea of mental measurement applied to young children.

The first intelligence test to be used at all widely with children was devised by Binet and published in 1905. Its aim was the separation of feeble-minded from normal children. Later, Lewis Terman, working on the revision of Binet's tests in America, extended their use by applying them to the separation of supernormal from normal children. Many subsequent revisions have made them a more precise instrument of measurement ; on the whole, their main use is to estimate children's educability.

Binet made his scale on the principle of " sinking shafts into the mind at as many points as possible." Consequently, tests based on his scale consist of a number of " mixed " items. Among other ideas which psychologists and teachers owe to the genius of Binet are certain concepts which later workers have extended. One of these is " mental age," suggesting that children pass through successive levels of mental growth. This led to

<sup>1</sup> R. Stutsman ; *Mental Measurement of Pre-school Children*. (World Book Coy., 1931.)

the evolution of a further useful term, "intelligence quotient," by Stern, enabling a direct comparison to be made between one child's rate of development and probable adult level of intelligence with another's.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL SCALES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Scales based on Binet's original one can be used with children under six, but most psychologists prefer some of the later scales which have been developed from detailed studies of young children themselves. Not only do these seem more "natural" for pre-nursery and nursery school ages; they are actually founded on an extension of the idea of what we can and should try to measure during this period. In the words of Dr. Charlotte Bühler, herself a brilliant contributor to our understanding of how children develop, investigators in this field have tended to "shift from emphasis on the intellectual level to one of total behaviour."<sup>1</sup>

There are two types of "measuring tool" for young children; the developmental scale and the test of ability and intelligence. In using a developmental scale, the general procedure is to watch children's behaviour at home or in a nursery, and to compare it with the "developmental norm" for children of that age. In using an intelligence test, little situations are arranged and a comparison is made between children's responses and the "norm." In both scales and tests, some special apparatus must be used. If one of the items is to complete a picture puzzle, the puzzle presented must always be the same and introduced in the same way, otherwise the situation is different. There is, of course, overlapping between scales and tests. A developmental scale usually involves

<sup>1</sup> C. Bühler and H. Hetzer: *Testing Children's Development from Birth to School Age*. English translation by Henry Beaumont. (George Allen and Unwin, 1932.)

some very simple apparatus, such as teething-rings and toy bricks. A good test, or perhaps one should say a good tester, allows some free use of the apparatus by the child, but only *in addition* to the directed activity.

In recent years there have been a number of experiments in scales and tests for young children. Here the most complete and widely used of each will be described.

### GESELL'S DEVELOPMENTAL SCALES

Arnold Gesell, as a result of prolonged and profound observation of young children in the Guidance Nursery of the Yale Psycho-clinic, published in 1925 and 1928 developmental scales applicable to children from one month to three years. He took as his starting-point the natural movement of children and their response to their human and other environment. He watched closely and recorded, from work with large numbers of babies, the age at which most of them showed certain patterns of behaviour. He noted, for instance, that at three months most children smile responsively when one smiles at them, but that they do not turn their heads at a voice or a bell until two months later. Again, at seven months, most babies will pick up a cube from a table, but not until they are ten months will they accept a second cube without first dropping the one they are already holding.

From such detailed studies, Gesell was able to throw considerable light on what is meant by growth in general and mental growth in particular. "Growth denotes a capacity to change, in a constructive, progressive form from one level of performance to another. . . . Mental growth is a constant process of transformation and reconstruction."<sup>1</sup>

Gesell arranged his 1928 scale so that children's behaviour could be recorded under four main headings

<sup>1</sup> Arnold Gesell : *Infancy and Human Growth*. (The Macmillan Company, 1928.)

representing "cross-sections of the behaviour tree at ascending levels of growth."<sup>1</sup> These cross-sections are :

1. Motor development, which includes a baby's growing control and use of his own body, from the earliest attempts to lift his head for a moment to the co-ordination of muscular activity needed for going up-stairs or drawing with a pencil.

2. Language, that is, understanding as well as use of voice and words. Stages are noted, ranging from the earliest purposeful cries to fully articulate and syntactical speech.

3. Adaptive behaviour, which may be summarized as a child's response to whatever stimulates him in his environment, and ranges from giving fleeting attention to a moving object to the older child's attempt to imitate any adult action which has caught his interest.

4. Personal-social behaviour, a child's use of the opportunities of his environment, including his response to other human beings. At two months, for example, he will kick in his bath of his own accord, at three months he will begin to play with his own fingers, at five months he can distinguish between strangers and those whom he knows and at nine months he will wave good-bye.

These four cross-sections, taken together, give a fairly comprehensive picture of a child's behaviour. Because they are based on the continued study of many children they can, when applied to any one child, give at least an indication as to whether he is average, advanced or retarded for his age. This does not mean that any child necessarily shows equal development under all four headings, and indeed a nursery school would be a dullish place if this were so. But it does mean that in any one of those four aspects of behaviour there is no "transposition

<sup>1</sup> Gesell : *Op. cit.*

of events." Every baby goes through the three months stage of motor development, for instance, before he reaches the four months level; or, expressed the other way, no baby exhibits the four months pattern *before* he has shown the three months. Whether a child is average, subnormal or supernormal in his growth, that growth tends to be consistently average, subnormal or supernormal, unless there is some very outstanding circumstance to interfere with that child's natural rhythm. It will be noted that this is a confirmation of Binet's "mental age" as representing orderly, individual progress.

#### THE MERRILL-PALMER SCALE OF TESTS

Gesell's work is intended to help in the assessment of pre-nursery school children. The most attractive and widely used test for children between two years and about six and a half is that standardized at the Merrill-Palmer School in Chicago, and described in *Mental Measurement of Pre-school Children* by Rachel Stutsman.

This test is the result of considerable research. In its final form, the scale consists of thirty-eight subtests, some of them adaptations of earlier tests by other workers. It is an intelligence test, in the usual sense of the term, and differs from Gesell's scale in that it sets out definitely to estimate children's ability rather than to present a picture of their behaviour level, which indicates but does not measure ability as such. But as the Merrill-Palmer test involves a long individual interview, during which the examiner establishes a rapport with the child and watches his responses to a variety of situations, the result is more than a mere mental age assessment. "The scale places a child in an experimental situation in which we can compare his responses to those of many children in the same situation. The sum total of the child's reaction is significant. . . . It is not enough to get the mental

test score when at the same time we might have a much more valuable measure of that entity, the responding child."<sup>1</sup>

The test items are arranged in order of difficulty and grouped to represent six-monthly levels of development, beginning at eighteen months. Thus tests 1 to 11 indicate the average achievement of children between eighteen and twenty-four months; tests 12 to 21 the achievement of children between twenty-four and thirty months, etc. Some of the tests appear in the scale once only, others are timed and the more quickly a child finishes these, the higher the level at which he scores. Each test counts as one point and the child's mental age is calculated from the total score. As children under six, especially in a test situation, are at least likely to refuse to co-operate from time to time, adjustments are made on the score so that every refusal does not count as a failure.

#### WHY IS THE MERRILL-PALMER TEST ATTRACTIVE TO BOTH CHILDREN AND EXAMINERS?

First, because it is essentially a performance test; that is, the child spends most of his interview busily touching, moving and experimenting with brightly coloured objects out of gaily coloured boxes.

Secondly, the tasks are interesting in themselves. Fitting pegs into holes, doing "puzzles" of all kinds, building with bricks, sorting colours and matching pictures are activities which appeal to all children. Attempts to imitate an adult's finger movements calls forth a laughing response from some children, and many, though by no means all, like answering questions, showing how grown-up they are with words.

Thirdly, there is variety of activity. Children are rarely

<sup>1</sup> Stutsman: *Mental Measurement of the Pre-school Child*.

bored or restless during this test. Indeed, it is the common experience of psychologists in clinics that difficult under-fives often begin by being tearful or obstinate and end by refusing to go home or be parted from the test material.

Lastly, the test is well scaled, so that the child is introduced to the more difficult tasks gradually and the examiner has the satisfaction not merely of watching progress through these stages, but also of challenging and correcting her own first subjective estimate.

### THE VALUE OF STANDARDIZED PROCEDURE

In giving this or any other properly standardized test, the examiner is bound to follow a fairly rigid routine, and to mark by established scoring standards. Tasks are presented in a certain order and in certain words; what shall be accepted as "right" or "wrong" is also carefully laid down. But these restrictions, if rightly understood, bring both confidence and peace. There is no need for the tester to worry as to whether any particular task is "suitable" for a child being tested. Neither has she to decide what response a child ought to give or how his response should be evaluated. And at the end there is an estimate of how the child being examined compares with others of his age in performing tasks which require intelligence.

The very standardization of the procedure, moreover, brings a compensating freedom. A test interview makes it possible to compare children, not merely children's results. As experience in testing increases, similarities and differences can be noted. It is not always possible to interpret a child's present response in terms of his future development, but, as the history of the making of standardized tests shows, accurate observation is the necessary foundation of later interpretive work. Dr.

Stutsman emphasizes the same point: "We realize that every movement a child makes in the test situation is conceivably significant, if only we had the key. The pre-school child in a test situation offers a fascinating field for personality observations."<sup>1</sup>

Children's attitudes to adults, to themselves, to success and failure, to frustration, encouragement and praise often show with remarkable clarity in a test interview, and give valuable guidance as to their needs. Molly's mother and her teacher (who allowed no free activity in school, by the way), considered her backward. A test showed that she was well above the average, but so self-critical that she hardly dared to try to do anything at all. She had a brother of four and a half, a year her junior, who was considered much brighter. Their mental levels were actually the same, but Molly's attitude to herself was preventing her from showing what she could do.

Peter, just two, liked the test but refused to do anything by request or persuasion. He would imitate the examiner's block tower or bridge, but if she *asked* him to build one he swept the apparatus on to the floor with a lordly gesture and demanded "anither box." He would not answer any questions when they were put to him. The examiner asked hopefully from time to time, "What does a doggy say?" He pursed his lips and remained aggressively silent. But half an hour after she last asked, he flung his arms round her neck and bellowed into her ear, "The doggy says 'BOW-WOW-WOW.'" Peter's prevailing attitude was obstinacy, natural enough in a two-year-old but becoming in him a fixed character quality because of unwise handling. Celia, aged three and a half, lowering under her mop of dark, unbrushed curly hair, was considered unmanageable by her long-suffering parents. It was, indeed, difficult to test her, because she went one better than Peter. She not only

<sup>1</sup> Stutsman: *Op. cit.*



refused to do anything if she were asked, but insisted that the examiner should do it instead. She shouted in a deep, gruff voice, "You do it, lady; go on, you do it." This went on for a long time, until a quiet, firm refusal, in a later interview, brought a dramatic change. Her face cleared and she said with almost a sigh of relief: "Auntie, I'll do all the washing-up for you." Here was a child who needed some protection from her own aggressive impulses. She was not, in fact, so much an unmanageable child as one who had never been helped, by wise restraint, to deal with the normal childhood conflict between primitive impulse and the demands of a civilized environment.

#### TRAINING FOR USING INDIVIDUAL TESTS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

An individual test is really a standardized interview and interviewing is an art. It will be clear from the examples quoted above that the use and interpretation of tests, for young children in particular, demand both knowledge and skill. Well-constructed scales, such as the two described in this chapter, are published with manuals of minute directions for administering the tests and well-defined scoring standards. But testing technique and skill cannot be wholly learned from a book. Although it is a scientific procedure, based upon scientific findings, it is also an art passed on from the experienced to those who are new to it. Testers who have undertaken training after they have been testing are surprised to realize, retrospectively, how many mistakes and therefore miscalculations even a sensible person can make.

At present, individual tests are used by educational psychologists, by school medical officers, and by teachers. The first of these have, ordinarily, a degree in psychology, teaching experience and a special training in child

guidance. School medical officers, in addition to their medical qualifications, have usually attended special courses in mental testing. Some local education authorities arrange courses in testing for experienced teachers who are interested.<sup>1</sup> The essence of all such training courses, long or short, is that they include in addition to lectures and discussions on the theory of testing, both demonstrations with children and supervised practice. It is the last which cannot be got from the most carefully prepared manual.

#### THE PLACE OF INDIVIDUAL TESTING IN GENERAL EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

Intelligence testing is usually associated with particular educational services; child guidance, for instance, and selection procedures for children of eleven plus.

All children attending Child Guidance Clinics are given an individual test, because knowledge of a child's intellectual assets and liabilities helps to determine both diagnosis and treatment. A very bright truant is likely to absent himself from school for quite different reasons from those tempting a very dull boy to stay away.

When children are being selected for one or other kind of secondary education, it is obviously necessary to estimate or review their abilities and interests.

But standardized scales are of distinct value in general educational practice, beginning in the nursery school. Their use here is educational guidance, and this is true whether the testing is actually done by an educational psychologist or by a member of the school staff, properly

<sup>1</sup> In general it is not advisable for young teachers, in their first three years of professional life, to undertake such training. Their background knowledge of children is too thin and testing technique, prematurely acquired, tends to foster a mechanistic approach to children.

trained.<sup>1</sup> On the whole, it is probably true to say that if an educational psychologist is available, it is usual to ask him to test, partly so that an outside opinion is obtained to compare with the teacher's. Moreover, it is extremely difficult for anyone, whatever her qualifications, to be objective when testing a child whom she knows quite well. Even the most conscientious teacher is likely to be influenced in her assessment of a child's response by her previous knowledge of his abilities and attitudes. Many kindly teachers object to their children being tested by a stranger on the ground that this is a frightening situation. But the art of putting even frightened children at their ease is part of the equipment of every well-trained psychologist, and provided they are properly reassured, many children will reveal interests, attitudes, fears and prejudices which they guard jealously from those who see them every day and whose attention they have to share with thirty or forty others. Such "revelations" are, of course, largely unconscious; if a child feels confident of a sensible stranger's interest, he will let himself play, work and talk without the minimum of restraint.

In any case, whoever does the testing, teachers and psychologists will discuss the findings and work out a plan of action, whether this be referral to a clinic or modification of school treatment or teaching method.

#### ON WHAT PRINCIPLES SHOULD CHILDREN BE SELECTED FOR TESTING ?

Individual testing must be unhurried and each child takes at least an hour to test. It will be long before there

<sup>1</sup> The school medical officer's function in ascertaining the children who require what is technically known as "Special Educational Treatment" is not discussed here, because attention in this chapter is focused on educational matters within the school rather than with administrative aspects.

is time to test all children before they are seven, so that some selection must be made. In general, the children about whom it is difficult "to make up our minds" are the problems on whom testing may throw some light.

Children who appear to be backward should be tested before they begin formal work in the three R's. In the course of examining some hundreds of children of between eight and twelve, the writer has been struck by their attitude of defeat, depression or defiance. Many a tough lad has assuaged her either that he does not want to read or that "nobody can't teach me, miss." These attitudes seem to be related to earlier rather than present failure and discouragement; by the time they are eight, many backward children have given up trying. If a child is given a test at five or six and is found to be well below the average in intelligence, formal work should be postponed until he is more mature and therefore better equipped for acquiring the very complex skills of reading and number. The extra time spent on informal activities is well *spent*; it is not wasted, since it enables a child to gain mastery over the simpler skills, muscular control, speech and elementary number awareness without which it is impossible for him to learn the more complex. The child whose time is being *wasted* is the one who is trying to do what he is too immature to do, in body, mind and spirit.

It is often helpful to test a child about whom parents are anxious. Some parents feel they must push their children on. If a test result suggests that a child is average or bright, parents can be reassured and will often then relax their efforts. If, however, subnormality is indicated, the teacher or psychologist will need both tact and sympathy in explaining that it is to the child's interest to let him develop at his own rate.

Children showing serious behaviour difficulties should be referred to a Child Guidance Clinic as early as possible.

But where this service is not available, or when the difficulty is a mild one, a test may be given. A very retiring child, for instance, will sometimes show interests and aptitudes which are not suspected even by his teacher, because he remains passive amid the general activity of a group of noisy and perhaps self-assertive children. Armed with more precise knowledge than observation of him in a group could give, the teacher can now plan more effective help. In contrast, a restlessly aggressive child sometimes proves to be inferior in intelligence; his difficult behaviour arises from boredom. He frequently fails to understand the purpose of the activity of his group and cannot take in or remember instructions which would help him to make what he wants. When she knows that he is, in spite of his clamorous and self-important behaviour, actually a slow child, the teacher can temper both her teaching and her reproofs!

Children who cannot or will not speak, are a particular challenge to any teacher. It is not advisable to take any action about such a child until he has had ample time to settle into school. But as not speaking can be a sign of retardation, a child who remains inarticulate should be tested. Sometimes the diagnosis of retardation is confirmed by a general poor performance; sometimes such a child will show that he is by no means dull though he may well be mildly or seriously maladjusted.

Standardized tests, used judiciously, and supplemented by day-to-day observation and understanding of children, and by consultation with school medical officers and psychologists, can add to understanding of backward and difficult children. That is, they play a part in educational guidance almost from the beginning of a child's school life.

# HAVE THE RESULTS OF INTELLIGENCE TESTS GIVEN TO CHILDREN UNDER SIX ANY PERMANENT SIGNIFICANCE?

This question is the subject of many heated arguments not unclouded by prejudice on one side or both!

A well-standardized test, based not on ideas of what children ought to be able to do at certain ages but on what they can actually do, should be able to show fairly reliably how a child compares with other children of his age—if it is given by a trained person.

Unless there are special environmental circumstances affecting a child's natural rate of development, the result of such a test as the Merrill-Palmer, given before a child is six, is likely to be confirmed by the results of tests given later in his school life, if these are equally well standardized and well administered. But in no case are even good tests likely to give *exactly* the same result and sometimes substantial differences will occur. It must be remembered that although the tests are called tests of intelligence, intelligence itself is a very elusive quality to try to measure. No definition has yet been found that satisfactorily covers all its manifestations. Moreover, in relation to young children in particular, no one yet knows enough about the factors which affect a child's *use* of his natural endowments to be sure that any test really measures potential ability.

So that, for purposes of long-term educational guidance, for the keeping of cumulative records, intelligence tests should be given three or four times during a child's school career. An intelligence rating should never be regarded as absolute, as something fixed and almost magic. It should be understood for what it actually is: a method of expressing the result of a child's performance in a particular test in terms of the "normal" performance for his age. (Incidentally, an intelligence quotient recording should always be accompanied by the name of the test on which it was calculated.)

The Education Act of 1944 makes certain provisions and recommendations which call for increasing skill in assessing children's all-round development. The provisions for secondary education alone call for instruments of selection which teachers and administrators do not in fact possess. Education according to "age, ability and aptitude" means being able to calculate the abilities and aptitudes as well as the ages! And even if that were possible, there would still be those variations of temperament and character which affect the use of natural abilities, to reckon with.

Long-term records of large numbers of children are needed before it will be possible to rely on the prognostic and diagnostic value of any test used. Some at least of these studies can begin in the nursery school and be based on the comparison of nursery school findings, both tests and general observations, with the later careers and interests of the children.

## CHAPTER VI

### SPEECH

WHEN the child learns to talk it is as though he finds a key that unlocks a new phase of his development, for speech is a means to, as well as an indication of, the remarkable psychological growth that begins at about one year and a half and increases in vigour during the next four or five years. The cooing of a contented baby is as instinctive as the midsummer sound of doves, his cries of want as elemental as the roaring of young lions which "do lack and suffer hunger." Facial expression becomes very mobile from about two months and by five months it is quite clear that the baby's smiles express very early feelings of relationship to the people who care regularly for him, more especially the mother. Here indeed is the nucleus of the wish to communicate. By six months he is capable of syllabic utterance—la la, dad, ga ga. Observation shows how very pleasurable his early babbling is to the baby. For a time he seems just to be enjoying his own sensations and the new feel of making meaningless sound. Quite soon however this babbling differentiates itself into expressions of recognizable emotions, eagerness, pleasure, displeasure and even scolding noises. Some observations by Dorothy Burlingham and Anna Freud suggest that there is often a further differentiation of sounds to express some special feeling which the child attaches to beloved people. They describe a child of nine months who developed a special chuckling noise which she kept exclusively to show her pleasure in her mother. At eleven months this gave place to particular



grumbling noises which expressed a new turn in the child's attitude to the parent—a special demanding relationship. In a nursery crowded with adults and other children these sounds were never used except for the mother. Long before speech has any cognitive significance therefore it would seem that the more primitive significance of expressing the child's emotions. These are obviously deeper and more compelling where the relationship to his mother is concerned. The importance of the child's feelings for the mother cannot therefore be underestimated in their effect on even the primitive elements of speaking.

Infantile babbling is characteristic of children of every race, Eskimo, Chinese, Negro, European, who make substantially the same sounds : and it occurs even in children born deaf which proves that it is independent of hearing or imitation. Karl Bühler calls it the vocal stone quarry of the human language. Lewis who has made a very careful phonetic study of these early sounds says "when the child begins to utter labial and dental consonants which are phonated sucking-movements, states of discomfort are represented by m and n forms, states of comfort by p, b, d, t forms."<sup>1</sup> Though individual children vary, labials and dentals seem to come more easily to the child; l, th; hisses or buzzers s, z; the more complicated ch, dge, etc., later. A similar classification of vowel sounds according to mechanical difficulty also emerges from a study of this early babbling. This gradual mastery of the production of vocal sounds suggests that later forms of speech-training should follow a similar progression, for the facility acquired in this early period is often submerged by later difficulties of hearing and imitation when the child adopts conventional

<sup>1</sup> M. Lewis : *Infant Speech*. (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co.)

language. Rodney Bennett in *First Stages of Speech Training*—also in *Play Way of Speech Training* arranges his jingles and rhymes on this principle with the sensible proviso that such jingles should possess a quality of interest for the age at which they are used. Traditional rhymes and tongue twisters have their value here and every enterprising nursery school teacher can make an anthology of her own.

### BABBLING PASSES INTO SPEECH

Between six and nine months the second stage of progression, focusing of attention and intelligence, can be observed in the child's advance upon significant speech. Certain syllables have assumed meaning by the interpretation put upon them by those in charge of the child and he begins to listen and even to imitate certain sounds which lie close to his natural babbling. "Speech grows out of impulses of the most primitive nature. . . . At first the sound expressions are still embedded in the more diffuse activities of these impulses and only by degrees free themselves as independent acts."<sup>1</sup> Good-enough suggests in *Developmental Psychology* that the incomprehensible babbling of the younger child passes over into true speech not so much by a process of extension as by the one of limitation. The process is similar to that followed by the child in established muscular co-ordination, for he learns gradually to isolate specific sounds from general babble and to use them to express specific wants. "From the babbling of infancy develop the word forms that the child is able to produce at will. . . . Thus he learns to talk." The child attaches no meaning at first to his imitations though in many children repetition of heard speech is so pronounced that

<sup>1</sup> Stern: *Op. cit.*

they reproduce not only separate sounds but the general sound of continuous conversation. "They develop an amusing conversation-like jargon in which they jabber for hours at a time."<sup>1</sup>

When the child reaches the stage in which meaning is attached to any selected sound, the influence of training and adult speech begins to operate, and when the mother plays with the baby and talks to him of "tick-tock," teaching him to wave bye-bye, etc., speech progress is usually more rapid than where children are neglected. The general experience of war-time residential nursery workers was that children in some of these institutions were far slower in learning to speak than were children in their own homes. Dorothy Burlingham and Anna Freud state "When children are home on visits, for instance at Christmas or during their mother's holidays, they sometimes gain in speech in one or two weeks what they would have taken three months to gain in the nursery. Similarly there are many examples of children brought up at home who lose their newly-acquired ability to speak during an absence of the mother. Regression of this kind is further proof of the inter-relation between contact with the mother and learning to speak."<sup>2</sup> Many children who have even reached the stage of speaking a few words have been known to give up speaking for as long as a year or more, when the birth of a new baby makes a radical interference with their mother's relationship at this time. Direct efforts to "teach" the child are often fruitless, and are better abandoned in favour of special ways of giving him the needed reassurance that he is loved and of helping him to deal with his jealous feelings.<sup>3</sup> In *Infant Speech* Lewis points out that often

<sup>1</sup> Goodenough: *Developmental Psychology*. (Appleton Century Co.)

<sup>2</sup> *Infants Without Families*.

<sup>3</sup> *Fears and Jealousies*, by Ruth Thomas. (National Association for Mental Welfare, price 6d.)

the three processes, expression, imitation and training, combine to link a sound with a definite situation, and that when this stage is reached the child's advance is rapid.

The first half of the second year sees a real assault upon language. Out of the baby's repertoire of expressive sounds and imitative noises there emerges a vocabulary, intelligible at least to those nearest the child. He attaches sounds to familiar people and objects and is stimulated to linguistic invention by the lively interest he takes in his surroundings. Words frequently take an onomatopoeic form: moo-moo; bow-wow; quack-quack. Any list of first words contains repetitive words such as din-din; ta-ta. One hopes the story of the baby whose third word was "atmospheric" is apocryphal! It frequently happens, however, that intelligent children who are able to understand spoken language are very late in learning to talk, and when they begin they do so by using not isolated words but whole sentences. It is often not realized how much a child understands of adult speech long before he can use it himself. Parents frequently feel helpless with children who are unusually slow at speaking, and make less use of spoken communication than they might do with advantage. This further retards the child's growth not only in speech but in his sense of being an independent person. It usually means that the mother does many things for the child which he would quite understand doing for himself if talked to about them. This independence would naturally further his wish to talk and so speed up progress in all directions.

Though the child has by now linked sounds with definite situations, it is doubtful if at this stage the word stands apart from the general situation. The single word used can be considered as a sentence, "milk," for instance, may mean "I want some milk," "chair," "lift me

into my chair." The object named is not separated from desire or feeling and the child uses the word to express a totality. Lewis notes the tendency to deal with a situation as a whole rather than an object within it and points out that throughout a child's development, language is so closely related to his activity that his first conventional words may well have a wider application than they have among adults.

#### THE APPEARANCE OF SENTENCES

According to Karl Bühler this form of speech can appear as early as fourteen months or as late as three and a half years. The next great advance, usually made between one and a half and two comes with the discovery that everything has a name. He believes that this discovery has for the intellectual life the importance that learning to walk has in the physical sphere. Now that he knows everything has a name, the child can manipulate things in his mind. "That? that?" he asks, in the earliest stages by means of an inquiring grunt, pointing to one thing after another, and as a result of his eagerness he increases his vocabulary very rapidly. One-word sentences are left behind and several words are combined into complete and sometimes complex sentences in the child's desire to make statements. Words are not always put together in the order used later. A negative is often expressed after an affirmative. "B . . . wants dinner no." "My doll, not touch." Sometimes composed sentences are made by juxtaposition: "Look dolly bed . . . put doll bed." There is also a taste for antithesis. "Boo" (the cat) "got tail. Babba got no tail." Ideas are probably more manageable set out in this way. By this age the child has passed the simple stage of recognizing familiar objects and pictures. He can now talk about the things he sees, interpreting the picture and even drawing conclusions from it. Charlotte Bühler gives

an example of this: "Baba laughing, Mama laughing; all laughing."

Vocabulary at one year and nine months to two and a half, consists chiefly of nouns and verbs though other parts of speech are beginning to be used. It is always difficult to classify a child's language into parts of speech. Words should be classified according to their meaning to a child not to the adult and as has been pointed out one word can mean either an entire situation or a request. With the young child speech activity is about as incessant as activity of trunk and limb, but, as H. Johnson has shown,<sup>1</sup> language as a tool for communication is not wholly developed, and gesture, largely full body gesture, is freely used. Towards two, however, gestures are giving place to words and vocabulary increases noticeably. Authorities differ considerably as to the size of vocabulary at any given age. Methods of selecting children and of testing them are varied, yet it would seem that ability to use 250-300 words is characteristic of the two-year-old. There are many, however, whose vocabulary is nowhere near 300. Especially is this true of institutional children, whose lives are so often passed in a narrowly-confined sphere in which experience is limited, and in the case of the children of illiterate persons or those who have been neglected. There are others whose vocabulary very much exceeds this number. These belong as a rule to cultured homes where they have been talked to and played with in a thought and language-promoting way. However, as Gesell points out, the length of a child's sentence and his ability to sustain intelligent conversation are more significant than the number of words used. Children, like adults, usually understand a great many more words than they use. There is as a rule a dearth of prepositions and conjunctions and an increasing ability to use these correctly is one

<sup>1</sup> H. Johnson: *School Begins at Two*. (The New Republic, N.Y.)

of the characteristics of the progress in language that a child makes between three and five.

### NURSERY SCHOOL AGE

By the age of two when the child enters the nursery school, he should have acquired a useful vocabulary and a knowledge of uninflected speech. He should then be able to speak of and interpret absent things and begin to use the language of thinking as shown by the words "because, if, when." Children do not always arrive so well equipped, and many of them pronounce such words as they know so badly that it is extremely difficult for the teacher to understand what the child is trying to tell her. This adds very much to his unhappiness and is sometimes the cause of temper tantrums from sheer exasperation. It is characteristic of the speech of most two-year-olds to mutilate words. Vowel sounds appear to be easier to grasp than consonants which are often eluded, either the initial consonant or last syllable is dropped, such as 'ittle for little, tow for towel. Then only the stressed syllable remains. This difficulty in pronouncing consonants rights itself fairly quickly as the child grows, especially if he hears words clearly and well spoken. Speech retardation may of course be due to various causes. As has been already suggested, children who are talked to and played with and those whose emotional and social developments are satisfactory tend, as a rule, to speak earlier and more freely than those who have been neglected. On the other hand spoiling in the form of too much attention and anticipating the child's needs by saving him from the necessity of asking, remove the incentive and delay the acquisition of speech. Emotional dependence which arouses the desire to remain a baby and thus keep the mother's attention, is also sometimes responsible. Ill health that retards all growth and

deafness or partial deafness can also delay or prevent speech development.

The fuller social life that the child experiences in the nursery school has an excellent effect on language development. Language is primarily a social instrument and the presence of other children as well as adults stirs the child to talk about the many things he sees and is enjoying. A great deal of talk is in monologue form. Children sit side by side, each carrying on a monologue, each stimulated by the presence of the other though neither listening to, nor responding to, the other. There is a tendency to repeat sentences for emphasis: "My daddy's going to give me a dolly—my daddy's going to give me a big, big dolly. My daddy's going to give me a dolly as big as this." In the same way children will sustain contact with adults by a long stream of conversation to which they do not require an answer, though they expect attention!

The more varied experiences in the nursery school and the many thought-promoting occupations are also conducive to the mastery of words and the acquisition of ideas. "In this, each of the two factors aids the other, the advance of ideas pushing the child to new use of sounds and the growing facility in word formation reacting powerfully on the ideas, giving them definiteness of outline and fixity of structure."<sup>1</sup> There are many ways in which the nursery school teacher can help the child to acquire good speech and an adequate vocabulary. She can encourage him to talk freely and widen his experience so that he will have ever more and more things to talk about and will thus acquire the necessary new words. She can let him hear his mother tongue beautifully expressed, by carefulness in her own speech—especially in tone of voice and use of words. Yet to speak slowly and distinctly are not in themselves enough. The

<sup>1</sup> Stern *Op. cit.*



words should include some that are unknown to the child and understandable by their context, and the voice should be full of colour and life. Children are very quick to notice artificiality and are depressed by dull monotony of tone or over simplification of speech. Unusual pronunciation or strange words amuse them; they repeat the words with much enjoyment—and profit! On one occasion a young student with a very Scottish accent heard a Cockney child call her friend Gricey. She said “We don’t call Gracey—Gricey.” “No,” answered the four-year-old without hesitation, “And we don’t call her Greasey neither.” They soon begin to find amusement in nonsensical words, in making them up and in repeating and elaborating newly-heard words. This play with words, or more correctly play with sounds is characteristic of the child’s sense of humour. He is amused by the unusual, the ridiculous, the unexpected—people falling over, an object turned upside down, a word pronounced differently. When he wants to be amusing he makes faces, falls about, twists his limbs—“making faces with my body” as a child aptly described it. His enjoyment in repeating and chanting words that strike him as “funny” and in inventing amusing names for things and people is far removed from that delight in using words either in a way that implies a double meaning or with the precision that constitutes wit. As Pope describes it :

“True wit is nature to advantage dress’d  
What oft was thought but ne’er so well expressed.”

Wit is an intellectual achievement possible only when the individual has acquired a rich store of words so clearly mastered that they can be used as jewels to catch and reflect the light of the mind. The teacher who with a quick and nimble mind, a sense of humour and skill in the turning of a phrase helps the child to build a vocabulary

of clearly understood words can aid his intellectual development possibly more than by any other service she can render.

### BUILDING A VOCABULARY

Dr. Montessori has pointed the way to vocabulary building in the precise words and phrases she requires to be used in presenting her material to children. For instance, instead of the words "big" and "little" used indiscriminately to differentiate objects of different proportions, words that clearly describe the difference must be used. Large and small or big and little for objects in which there is a reduction in three dimensions. Long and short for those with a decrease in one dimension, etc. Similarly the exact names are given to all the various colours and geometric forms employed. Children experience no more difficulty in learning these terms and phrases than in acquiring the names of the thirty or forty children they meet daily in the school. Every new experience can be accompanied by new words to express it. The teacher does not need to talk much, and to say a little and say it well is probably sounder psychologically than to half drown the child in a sea of words, as so many teachers do. Words do not mean anything to a child until they are associated with actual experience. To learn the use of suitable words therefore is an essential part of instruction at this age. All the various tools and utensils used by the children can be spoken of correctly and also the flowers in vases, the plants in the garden. Stories can be told and rhymes repeated till children nearly know them by heart and are able to join in using words that are normally outside the scope of daily conversation. Two to four years of age is the sensitive period for language development during which children are receptive to teaching and quick to imitate and repeat all they hear. It is a time that should be utilized fully,

for it is as difficult to compensate at a later period as it is to eliminate bad pronunciation and faulty phrasing. The nursery school provides a unique opportunity for the development of good speech for its own sake and as a spur to intelligence and sociability.

During the nursery period children make considerable progress in the use of pronouns. Ballard gives the introduction of them as I (which is used as a rule between 24th and 27th month though frequently earlier) you, myself, him, her, my, you, he, she. Children may then be expected to acquire the inflection of verbs, a knowledge of plurals, comparison of adjectives and adverbs. Karl Bühler notes that "the chief inflection of words all appear at almost the same time, a proof that they are probably due to the same mental advance." The language progress which a child makes from 3-5 years of age is typified by "ability to use prepositions appropriately, by his employment of descriptive words, his tendency to deal with larger units of thought, and his ability to bring clauses and sentences into logical relation both in imagination and practical narration."<sup>1</sup> In grammar the child tends to be more logical than the language itself, "she's" for "hers"—quoted by Sully—is reasonable and so is the general weak conjugation of verbs, though possibly by some survival of the genius of the language a child occasionally coins a fine new form. Sully quotes "scram" for screamed and "splat" for split. Most teachers and parents will be able to recall the original and vigorous way the child lays hold of language and subdues it to his use. If a child does not understand a word he converts it to an understandable one—"Our Father who art in heaven, Harold be thy name"—being a well known and frequently heard interpretation. "The child's phraseology is the real arena of his independent activity. If he wants to express a thought-form for which he can

<sup>1</sup> Gesell: *Mental Growth of the Pre-School Child*.

find in the stock of phrases he has acquired no fitting expression, he comes to his own help in his own way.”<sup>1</sup> Hilda Stern called sheep and lambs “Mama baas and Hilda baas”: a small boy not knowing the word kennel, spoke of a “dog’s garage.”<sup>2</sup> Another made reference to a fierce dog as like a “lion-bear.” Yet another spoke of rain as pattering. “We must remind ourselves . . . that when a gifted child with full heart and pent-up mind makes use of such everyday words as flower, bird, home, mother, longing; hate, afraid, magic, dark, time, and so forth, they may be symbols to him of sensations or thoughts or feelings from the intensity of which life and habit may for us have taken off the edge. Scores of early memories have given proof enough of this. Harriet Martineau’s prismatic colours, Frank Kendon’s succory flowers, Mr. Forrest Reid’s dream, Thomas Hardy’s first love and the sunset colours on the staircase, Leigh Hunt’s porpoises. The mere words for such experiences are poverty stricken to convey the state of mind and imagination that may have been not merely of the earthly moment but related to the experience of the mystic.”<sup>3</sup>

With the knowledge gained from handling things, the child between two and four soon learns to use words expressive of space relationship. It is easy to demonstrate above, below, inside, near, underneath, etc. Time relationship presents greater difficulties and few three-year-olds use words like yesterday and to-morrow correctly. The words merely connote some time that is not now. “Are we going to the country holiday yesterday?” “No, not yesterday, next month.” “Will that be Christmas?” “To-morrow,” “next month,” “Christmas,” and “when I’m a big girl” are all much of a muchness and not clearly distinguished from yesterday.

<sup>1</sup> Stern: *Op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Board of Education Report on the *Teaching of English*. (H.M. Stationery Office.)

<sup>3</sup> W. de la Mare: *Early One Morning*. (Faber and Faber.)

The confusion is perhaps understandable. The concept of time is so abstract and puzzles even mature minds. Moreover for little children life is so vivid, memory so clear, and imagination so lively that they find it difficult to differentiate the present from past experience or to comprehend a future. When they are promised something in the future they are helped if it is related to known experience, such as "when you have been to bed for two nights it will be the party day."

### VERBAL REASONING

Practical reasoning is very much ahead of the ability to do so in words and in his play the child shows that he is reasoning, judging and drawing conclusions long before he does so verbally. Towards four he begins to ask and to give reasons; to think things out and discuss them logically. When he habitually reasons verbally it represents a very big advance. This is usually followed by a spate of "why" and later of "how" questions. Sometimes these are causal questions, and at this more developed stage explanation as well as information is sought. Piaget in *Language and Thought of the Child*, gives a very illuminating classification of "why questions" and the many possible answers. All questions are not easily answered. One, quoted by Sully, asked by a small American girl after contemplating her small sister was: "Why ain't Edna Belle me, and why ain't I Edna Belle?" The search for causes which grows out of curiosity in general is, as Piaget says, one of the most subtle forms of intellectual interest, and carries the child on to a really scientific frame of mind. "Why" becomes "How." "How do babies come?" is a very general question towards the end of the fourth year. Sometimes the form of the question shows that the child has already gone some way in the arrangement of facts. "About lions," asked a boy of four and a half, "Do they grow

like a plant, are they born like a baby, or did someone sit on an egg?"

Interest in stories grows towards five years of age. This is probably all part of the same movement of the mind, and an expression of the desire for an extension of the child's world to things beyond his immediate environment—a step in the journey towards abstract thought.

Though experiments, tests and observations of the development of speech have been extensively carried out, especially during the first two years of life, a great deal more research on the subject is needed. The nursery school is an ideal place for this. The children are free and spontaneous; they remain in school for many hours a day, including meal and bed time, at which children talk as freely they would at home. As there are middle-class nursery schools as well as those for the poorer class comparative studies could also be carried out. It is to be hoped that future nursery school teachers will be able to pursue investigations in different aspects of development of which speech is an important one because of its bearing upon intellectual growth and social adjustment. But even if such research is not always possible, every teacher can do much to ensure that the child "says what he means and means what he says." Though language goes on developing throughout life, by the age of five at latest, children should have mastered the form of speech, have a vocabulary of about 2,000 words, and be capable of understanding adults and of expressing themselves easily and well.

## CHAPTER VII

### PROGRESS IN EMOTIONAL STABILITY

THERE is no aspect of early education more important than the cultivation of emotional harmony, essential as it is to both mental and physical health. It is not too much to say that the individual's usefulness as a member of society, his happiness and general efficiency are dependent upon it.

Men and women who remain emotionally immature are colourless in character and lack the driving force which enthusiasm provides. They are seldom fully aware of or able to make contact with others in a way that inspires fellowship. The power to enter acutely into the joys and sorrow of one's fellow men may carry with it the penalty of a too sensitive heart, but it does add enormously to the richness and vigour of life. On the other hand people with strong emotional impulses who either fail to control the expression of them or who repress them, are hampered instead of being enriched. Inner conflict, or the over-preponderance of any one emotion such as jealousy or fear, inevitably creates a lack of harmony in the whole personality which may render the most brilliant intellect powerless. It can also produce ill health and, according to the late Sir Farquhar Buzzard, Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, it frequently does so. He estimated the proportion of his patients whose ill-health was caused by some ill-regulated emotional disturbance as two-thirds. The unhappiness caused by lack of confidence, jealousy, feelings of frustration and loneliness is indeed incalculable. Often the victims of such psychological sickness seek compensation and escape into an imaginary world, wherein they play the parts they

vainly desire to fill in the real world of experience. Such people tend more and more to withdraw from normal life, hiding under masks that sometimes take the form of humility and uselessness, sometimes that of aggressive hostility. For most of these human misfits, subjective harmony seems to be definitely out of reach, even with the help of constant objective distraction. Some drift by this road into delinquency and crime, for the criminal is in many cases a person of unsatisfied desires who, feeling inadequate, tries to re-establish himself in his own estimation by outrageous deeds, feats of bravado and various unsocial acts by which he draws attention to himself. "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven," said Satan in *Paradise Lost*, and there is no doubt that many an emotionally ill-balanced person prefers the notoriety of crime to a feeling of constant and humiliating inferiority.

The strong man is he whose emotional life is as vigorous as a team of lively horses and as well controlled. He has at his command driving power to take him where he wants to go, however stiff the climb, however many the obstacles. Well-controlled use of this vital source of energy is usually accompanied by good physical health and the old expression "the face of a happy heart" is truly indicative of the marriage of emotional and physical health.

It is possible and important for education in emotional stability to begin in early years when the emotional life is vigorous. It is far more necessary for the young child to form the habit of using and expressing his feelings in a balanced and appropriate way than to acquire intellectual knowledge or specific skill.

### EARLY STAGES

Emotional behaviour occurs early in babyhood and as it usually arises from physical conditions, is more general than specific in character. Young babies screw up their



faces, cry lustily, and stiffen their bodies, but it is not easy to discover whether their behaviour is the result of anger, fear, hunger or pain. At that age, the emotions are unspecialized but they soon become more specific and appear under appropriate stimulation. "Fear, disgust, anger are found at the age of six months and jealousy by the age of eighteen months. The pleasant emotions differentiate into affection at twelve months and affection divides into affection for adults and for children at eighteen months. Thereafter more emotional reactions appear. Our language is rich in words that describe emotions: awe, wonder, surprise, elation, depression, melancholy, envy, love, anxiety, trepidation are but a few."<sup>1</sup>

As the child approaches his second birthday emotional activity increases in frequency and intensity. The years eighteen months to four are critically important from the point of view of the emotional life and it is at this time that the child must find opportunity for the full expression of his desires and at the same time learn to co-ordinate them and to become their master. At this age when resistance, affection and desire for independence are all strong, he must learn to steer his ship, to trim his sails and keep an even keel. He needs help and guidance from those who are themselves well-balanced emotionally and who have some understanding of the problem with which the child is confronted. The teacher should make a study of emotional development and will in doing so come to a better understanding of herself as well as of her children. She will discover how many of the disciplinary problems that occur in the nursery school are the direct result, not of the child's uncontrolled behaviour, but of her own unsatisfied and uncontrolled desires. It is important for her to have a life that is

<sup>1</sup> K. Bridges: *Social and Emotional Development in Pre-School Children*. (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd.)

emotionally, as well as intellectually, satisfying outside the school, in order that she may be free from emotional pressure in her dealings with the children.

### EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOUR AT TWO AND THREE

When the child, by reason of newly acquired powers of walking, begins actively to explore his environment of things and people, his experiments frequently bring him into situations that are strange and baffling. Adaptation is called for and emotional responses arise in reaction to new stimuli. The child experiences fear, curiosity, anger, pleasure and excitement. The emotions thus aroused create energy which must find an outlet. His reactions are at first very simple and primitive; he cries, runs away, hits or laughs, etc. If the emotion aroused is agreeable, he persists and possibly tries to repeat the experience. If it is unpleasant, he withdraws and avoids similar situations unless, as a result of influence, he is induced to master the emotion and possibly change it into another and more powerful one. Timidity for instance, may be replaced by courage, fear by fortitude. The very young child is uncritical of his own behaviour and cannot judge whether it is suitable or otherwise. He is influenced entirely by whether it succeeds or fails. If, for instance, by crying and running away the child succeeds in avoiding situations he dislikes or the necessity of doing things required of him, he will judge these acts to be successful and will resort to them whenever necessity again arises. In this way many a quite unsuitable response becomes habitual. It is part of the adult responsibility to help the child to enjoy and make a success of emotional behaviour that is suitable—such as laughing at a tumble—and not to enjoy unsuitable behaviour such as crying or temper tantrums.

At this age when the child is becoming increasingly conscious of himself and his power, one of the strongest

impulses is the desire to dominate. It is by the exercise of this impulse that he becomes master of his surroundings and successfully manipulates play materials. This assertiveness is the cause of many emotional outbursts, as the child is so often thwarted and frustrated by his lack of skill. This is particularly true if the child lives exclusively in an adult setting where he finds himself unable to lift things, to reach them as he sees others doing, or is prevented from doing the many things that suggest themselves to him. His inferior size and strength keep him at a disadvantage and the feeling of frustration arouses rage and rebellion in a normal child. A feeling of inadequacy if confined to specific situations only, is of no significance. No one can succeed in everything and throughout life such feelings are aroused by incidents which are accepted naturally. It becomes a source of danger, however, if the child is constantly frustrated, if he never succeeds in mastering the things around him which keep him ever a slave and dependent.

One of the many good features of the nursery school is that the furniture, equipment and all the general arrangements are planned to enable the child to live as master of his world, capable of succeeding in most of the actions he attempts, though not always without effort. Beds are low and easy to get in and out of, so different from the usual cot and its prison-like bars. Wash basins and taps, pedestal and plugs, tables and chairs, crockery, domestic utensils, as well as doors and windows, are all of a size and construction that enable the child to use them skilfully. Thus he gains power and confidence and is freed from a feeling of inferiority.

#### INFLUENCE OF THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The desire for independence and domination also brings the child into frequent conflict with the human world of children and adults. This social situation

arouses many emotions, jealousy, hostility, obstinacy, temper as well also as the incentive to control them. Every individual has to learn to subdue or control himself for the common good if he is to be a happy and useful member of society. The child learns slowly but is much helped by the social life of the nursery school. At first he is very inexpert in expressing the many emotions aroused by other children. He expresses himself in actions, not words and these frequently get him into difficulties. Other children respond with an equal display of emotion and thus quarrelling often breaks out. Yet, slowly and experimentally, he succeeds in building a pattern of behaviour that is satisfying to himself and to others. The strengthening of the social impulse has a strong influence in establishing emotional control.

In his attitude to adults the young child is often obstinate, for resistance to adult authority is at its height at about two and a half to three years of age. Such behaviour should be regarded as normal and right at this age. It is the expression of a wholesome impulse to develop will power and strength of character and to establish himself upon his two feet psychologically as firmly as he has just succeeded in doing physically. It is only by trial and error in his dealings with adults—or one might say more truly trial and success—that he can learn where conformity with adult wishes is inevitable and in which directions he can be free and independent.

#### THE MOTHER AND CHILD RELATIONSHIP

When the child passes from the amenable baby into the stage of obstinacy during which steps taken to protect him from harm are the cause of many emotional outbursts, this change is the cause of some concern to the mother if it is a first baby, and if she has not had the opportunity of studying the course of child development. Many a mother is troubled at this change. Some resort to

slapping and scolding, others show that they are deeply moved and make such comments as "Mother doesn't love you any more, you are too naughty," or "I am going to find another nice child instead of you." Such attitudes makes matters very difficult for the child whose behaviour is the direct result of forces and urges within him that are often greater than his power of control. He becomes a sort of battleground of conflicting forces, the urge to be independent and self-reliant, warring with the deep love he feels and craves, that tempts him to continue clinging and dependent. Mother love means protection and the child needs to feel sure of this. He is himself more loving at about two than previously and for this reason also does not want any separation from his mother. When conflicts occur between them because he is difficult and rebellious, this conduct invariably raises a barrier that arouses anxiety and fear in the child lest he thereby lose the love that means so much to him. This is, in fact, the first serious crisis the individual has to face in life, and one that is far reaching in its consequences. Subconsciously, the choice has to be made between becoming independent, cutting himself off from his mother with the risk of losing her, or to count the "world well lost for love," and remain docile and dependent. Either course carried to extremes must lead to difficulties later in life. The fear of loving and of yielding to love lest it become possessive has spoiled many a life. On the other hand a persistence of emotional dependence arrests growth at an infantile stage and leads later to a constant demand for sympathy and the inability to stand alone or make capable decisions, unless supported by expressions of approval.

The situation is rendered still more difficult for the child if another child is born in the family during this struggle for emancipation, especially if until then he has been the only child. If he has not been prepared for this

event or made interested and eager for a baby brother or sister, in his jealousy he sometimes tries sub-consciously to be a baby again and so hold the attention and love of the mother as once he did. Bed wetting, being "difficult" about food and needing to be fed, adopting babyish talk or ceasing to talk, developing pains and illness that arouse care and anxiety in adults, are but some of the devices resorted to by the unhappy, lonely child.

Where the mother is understanding and unfailing in showing her love ; when she recognizes that the bursts of obstinacy and rebelliousness are no more "naughty" than the cutting of teeth and rejoices in this evidence of healthy psychological growth, few of these anxieties or the behaviour to which they give rise occur and the child passes through the time of emotional upheaval strengthened and ready for the next step in life. The mother-child relationship is so close a bond that anything that disturbs it may cause serious consequences later in life. But it should not become over-emphasized or prolonged and the child should be encouraged and helped to become emotionally independent.

#### RELEASE THROUGH FANTASY PLAY

It is significant that while the child is passing through this stage, fantasy play occupies a considerable proportion of his time. Play of this kind provides a useful outlet for emotion, helps the child to find security and to face more readily the demands made upon him. He lives over his experiences and dramatizes himself in many situations of the wish variety. He spans the doll and scolds the teddy bear which affords great relief to him if he is feeling jealous or angry. It is also a means of getting rid of a feeling of guilt that rises so readily, if the child feels that he has displeased his mother, or fallen below his own standard of behaviour on which he has very definite feelings. By externalizing his hopes and fears in an

imaginary experience he gains power to face real situations. "One of the most helpful ways of studying the nature and relative strength of a child's own drives is by watching how he treats his dolls or playmates with whom he identifies himself. He treats them as he is accustomed to be treated and has them do what he wants to do. In the same way the role he selects to act is expressive of his own drives and ambitions, even if it is merely to squirm along the ground like an alligator. . . . Again observation of the way children behave with regard to those they dislike gives further clues to their own drives and behaviour-conflicts. Any person, and even the rag doll may be treated with favour or disfavour at different times dependent on real events which have encouraged, checked or handicapped the child. He may identify himself in his actions with the constraining authority and scold or impede the other self-surrogate. Or he may emulate the behaviour of the object of his affectionate attachment in flattering pantomime. Here we see among children at so early an age the origin of the social scapegoat or hero."<sup>1</sup>

Play material that gives opportunity for getting rid of emotional tension is necessary, such as hammer toys, target games and plastic material that can be taken to pieces without being destroyed, also dolls and models of animals and human figures. Material with which messes can be made is also desirable, for all this kind of play supplies an outlet for aggression that prevents its being used anti-socially.

During the period of emotional intensity, when the child is eagerly loving and demanding love, it is important for him to be cared for by and to associate with people who give and encourage an ample expression of love. This is necessary not only to give emotional satisfaction and so lay the foundation of mental and physical health,

<sup>1</sup> K. Bridges : *Primary Drives in Infancy*. Child Development, March, 1936.

but also to cultivate the soil in which the seeds of the spiritual life can germinate. From the complete dependence of babyhood, if the child is wisely guided, warmly loved, encouraged and protected, he should develop ever increasing self-confidence and self-reliance, without which he can never become emotionally poised or fully adult.

### THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE NURSERY SCHOOL

During the years in which such impulses are stirring and violent, life in a nursery school or class is extremely helpful to the child. In association with other children and with different adults the child's feelings are diffused over a larger number, instead of being focused on one or two people as is usual in his home. Thus they become less intense and less personal. In the nursery school the child tends to react to the situation as a whole rather than to the teacher as a person ; and gradually begins to get a true perspective of his relationship to other children and to adults.

"In the majority of cases the child's response to adults outside the home and to other children in the nursery school are never quite so intense or so ambivalent as to the actual parent or brother and sister at home. It is indeed a not uncommon experience to find the contrast quite marked. There are many children who are much easier to manage by any adult other than the mother and it is an interesting psychological question as to why this should be so. The skill and experience of the nursery school teacher must of course count a great deal, but this cannot be the whole factor, and by no means are all Nursery School teachers wiser than the children's mothers."<sup>1</sup>

It may be that the explanation lies in the fact that the

<sup>1</sup> Susan Isaacs : *The Nursery Years*. (George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.)



child meets the Nursery School teacher on a different footing. As he has never been dependent upon her as upon his mother he has not to fight against his own habitual attitude, nor hers, nor against any strong emotional tie between them. The teacher also is more detached and, unlike the mother, has time to wait for the child and his slow fumbling ways and to adjust herself to the "timelessness" of children as Wagoner calls it, for she has only one occupation—the care of the child. It is possible for her to be calm and unhurried as well as dispassionate.

Though naturally less attached to his teacher than to his parents, the child gives his love very generously to the adults in the nursery school and expects love from them, especially from his own teacher, and in this he must not be disappointed but must be sure of her response. Affection springs up between children too. They hold hands, sit close together, play near to one another and give many indications of liking one another. Some children are very demonstrative and want to kiss and carry one another about. They also want to sit close to the teacher, if possible in her lap and invite her caresses. The teacher must respond affectionately and not be afraid to show the tender feelings she has for each child, but she should help them to recognise that there are other and more desirable ways of showing affection than handling. Though she should occasionally pick up and comfort a lonely two-year-old, it is on the whole better for her to discourage physical contact either between children and herself or between one child and another. In the latter case she should explain that children do not like to be nursed or carried when they are getting big.

Tender emotions can be fostered by the keeping of pets, especially those that have young chickens, rabbits, guinea-pigs, etc. Children's love and tenderness are very real when caring for them. Reverence and awe, or

perhaps more truly, the seed from which they emerge will be set, if nature-work is skilfully treated.

### EDUCATING EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOUR

It must be realized that though emotions arise spontaneously, the child is quite inexperienced either in controlling these feelings or in expressing them in a way that is personally and socially acceptable. Education consists not in suppressing or eliminating but in helping the child to acquire suitable forms of behaviour for all situations. He has to be helped to increase and to vary the ways in which he reacts to impulses and situations and to make habitual such as are most suitable and appropriate. His responses are at first few. They frequently take the form of crying and running away in cases of fear and when angry kicking, stamping, pushing and hitting or throwing himself down. None of their reactions are suitable either in themselves or as the starting point of character formation. The child has to discover and adopt better ways of giving vent to his feelings. Crying is a common form of behaviour and with some children tears come readily. If the child cries because he falls down it does not necessarily mean that he has hurt himself. He may be merely annoyed—or humiliated by his own want of skill. He may cry if another child has a toy that he wants. In each situation the teacher has to help him to find a better way of reaction and one suitable to the occasion and so build up a variety of responses. She can suggest laughing at a fall, or seeing how quickly he can get up, unless the child has hurt himself or had a bad shock when he needs comforting. The cultured person is one whose reaction to any situation is always appropriate. This is indeed the secret of gracious living, for the uncultured have but few reactions which are used for many and varied occasions, a limitation as unpleasing as the habit—common to so many people, of using the same verbal

responses—"You don't say!" "What I mean to say!" etc.

Briefly skill in training lies in helping each child to find and adopt whatever behaviour gives him personal satisfaction and at the same time fits him to live with others. Behaviour cannot be standardized and each child must be helped to adopt the way that is suited to his age and temperament. Whenever possible, situations that arouse hostility, defiance and negative emotions generally, should be avoided. They weaken the child's confidence and dissipate energy that might be used constructively. Discipline should consist, not so much in imposing restrictions, as in providing outlets and in directing the flow of vital energy into channels that make for growth. In other words it means giving children the opportunity to do what they want to do, provided it is not harmful to himself or others.

Though the child must be given freedom and opportunity for the expression of his desires, it would be both impracticable and unsatisfactory to expect him never to conform to adult wishes when they are inconvenient to him. There must inevitably be certain matters in which the child is expected to do as the adult wishes and to control and subordinate his own desires in order to do so. These should not be too numerous, but they should exist. Children feel happier and safer when assured of a background of adult guidance, and are strengthened by the conviction that someone is looking after them who is stronger than they and who will not let them do what they know they should not do.

#### PROBLEMS OF DISCIPLINE

There are of course occasions on which, however tactfully the child is approached, he resists with violence, possibly with anger and refuses to do what is required of him. So long as temper is in the ascendant it is

inadvisable for the teacher to attempt anything, for discipline must never become a battle between the child and the teacher and cause a state of tension. She would be wise to withdraw temporarily giving the child time to recover and then to make a fresh approach, treating the situation impersonally and in a matter-of-fact manner, explaining that "everybody does it in the nursery"—or that "it is time to do it now"—and she must persist as long as is necessary to win the child to conform. He must realize that circumstances do not change, whatever his behaviour. If by tears or temper tantrums he succeeds in changing circumstances—if, for example, bedtime is postponed, or hand-washing abandoned, he will in all probability adopt the same behaviour on the next occasion. Unsatisfactory behaviour must never be permitted to become successful or enjoyable. Tantrums are often but an unconscious means of getting rid of aggressive feeling and should not be taken too seriously.

Adults have acquired a great many ways of avoiding doing what they do not wish to do. The child has but one reaction—"won't!" "Don't want!" The teacher who is really understanding will help the child in his difficulty, by suggesting ways that will bring mediate if not immediate results. She can say for instance—"Will you be ready to come when the clock strikes?" or "When you have finished that?"—or "It will be dinner time very soon, are you getting ready?" Working with the child in some such manner usually prevents conflicts and shows courtesy and consideration for him. To demand immediate obedience is neither just nor reasonable and in asking for it the teacher is more often intent on gaining emotional satisfaction herself than on training a child. Children dislike interruption when they are keenly interested in some project, just as heartily as adults do and "While stubbornness may be anti-social, persistence and willingness to carry on in spite of disappointments and

opposition, are of value to society, particularly if for a worthy cause. Anger is in itself neither good or bad. What makes it good or bad are the circumstances under which it appears and the after effect on behaviour."<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes children behave badly in order to focus attention on themselves, and when successful they tend to make a habit of such behaviour. The best way to deal with this is for the adult to turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to this sort of conduct and to manifest interest in the child when he is behaving well.

### OVERCOMING FEAR

One of the strongest emotions the child has to learn to face and control is the emotion of fear which every child experiences in some form or another and for which he should build up adequate responses. Fear is quite normal; it is a defence mechanism without which man could not have survived. The more intelligent a child is the more vivid are all his emotions and "intelligent children experience fear much more acutely than dull ones. . . They see so much, think so much and appreciate so much; and all the influences that flood on the mind are so acute that they suffer for being intelligent in this way. . . One of the definitions of the feeble-minded child is that he does not appreciate danger and fear as he should . . . he will expose himself to danger without realizing that he is in danger . . . he is not brave—just stupid."<sup>2</sup>

Children are chiefly afraid of unexpected occurrences. Sudden noises, such as thunder and lightning, alarm them and so do things that make them feel at a loss or insecure, strange places and people, darkness, quickly moving objects. Quarrelling among adults and especially between parents is also very frightening to the child because

<sup>1</sup> J. Anderson: *Happy Childhood*. (D. Appleton Century Co.)

<sup>2</sup> W. Moodie: *Children Fears*—pamphlet issued by the London Child Guidance Clinic.

of the feeling of insecurity it gives, and it is this insecure feeling that causes babies to cry when held by those whose grip is loose or fidgety. All children do not experience the same fears, nor do all of them occur in early years. Little children are much more frightened by loud or unexpected noises, and by anger among adults than older ones and whereas most young children delight in squeezing themselves into small spaces, many adolescents are afraid of such close confinement. "Fear waxes and alters with growth. It is shaped by intrinsic maturation as well as by experience, certainly during the period of infancy . . . the (fear) pattern we would suggest is as much the product of organic growth as the various stages in the elaboration and perfection of prehension."<sup>1</sup>

#### BUILDING UP MORALE

During nursery days the child can be helped in many ways to face his fears and to build up *morale*. The cause of the particular fear can be investigated, and the mother or teacher can adopt a calm attitude herself. Sometimes she can turn the alarming occurrence into a game and get the child to join in too, but it is generally better not to discuss the fear lest it help to fix this and hinder his effort to adjust himself.

In no case should children be required to do things of which they are really afraid. It would be both cruel and harmful. Facing fears means gaining courage to overcome them. If for example it is the see-saw that frightens the child, time spent in watching other children might help—or sitting by the child the teacher can make a song about it—"Here we go up, up, up, and down, down, down." Or if another child is teasing or gesticulating she can rob the incident of its terror by laughing and proposing to chase and catch the offender. Action is

<sup>1</sup>A. Gesell: *The Individual in Infancy* from *Foundations of Experimental Psychology*. Ed. Murchison.

usually more effective than words. If the fear is inspired by a dog—and big dogs are often terrifying to small children—the teacher can show its harmlessness by patting it and letting the child talk to it and feed it. On the other hand, a situation may arise when a child has to be taught caution in patting strange dogs and above all in crossing public roads. This must be achieved without arousing fear. Learning caution in this increasingly dangerous world should be inculcated by a training in alert awareness and self reliance, and it should be exempt from emotional significance.

In the presence of fear the teacher should always aim at breaking the tension by some action. Wherever the situation can be made the means of laughter, this should be done. Laughter cures most ills and robs fears of their terrors, but needless to say it must be laughter with a child at the thing that frightens him, and never laughter at the child himself or his fear. Above all she must encourage a frightened child to face its fear and not to run away from it. Fears faced usually become fears conquered.

"Fear and fortitude are opponents, but both are necessary for the growth of character. To omit fear altogether from a child's life, were that possible, would be like omitting vitamins or salt from diet. If fear and fortitude are developed hand in hand, the child will become resistant and sympathetic. Indeed the elements of character are so paradoxical that full development of fortitude depends on experiencing and overcoming fear. Wholesome fear generates its own mental antibodies. It is a kind of vaccination."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Crichton Miller is also illuminating on this subject. "Fear," he once said, "is on one side bondage and on the other side dis-ease. It is bondage because it distorts a child's adaptation to natural experience or his social relationships or both." It also

<sup>1</sup> Gesell: *Mental Growth of the Pre-School Child*.

"begets compensatory aggression and an aggressive child is neither co-operative nor contributive. . . . It prompts withdrawal from reality and hinders the child from making his adjustments to circumstances and environment. Real health means that the child should be at peace within himself and not constantly impelled to escape with some objective activity or distraction."

If helped wisely and in as matter-of-fact a way as possible, to face fear and adopt suitable responses, not only will the child acquire morale and fortitude and the essential qualities of real courage, but may also develop a "philosophical sense of humour which can be set down as one of the essentials of mental health. This sense of humour will serve him well as a child, it will serve him more as an adult."<sup>1</sup>

It is not only unusual or unexpected things that cause fear. Children may become suddenly afraid of things that they have experienced so frequently that it is not easy to understand the appearance of this new attitude. One who has enjoyed his bath for instance, and played merrily while taking it, may suddenly develop a terror of it or of going to the lavatory. Is it the rushing of water and the gurgling sound it makes as it rushes through the plug-hole, and if so, why should this suddenly frighten the child who has witnessed the occurrence so frequently without concern? Night terrors may occur soon after two. They occupy a considerable part of the child's fantasies and daydreams and are probably the cause of many fears. Others again may arise as a result of conscience that is born in these years, which often makes the child more severe with himself than adults would be, and very distressed when he falls below his standard. Such sudden fears are not as a rule long lived, but are very real and should they persist expert advice should be sought. The "much managed" child who has angry

<sup>1</sup> Gesell: *Guidance and Mental Growth in Infant and Child*.



outbursts sometimes becomes afraid of his aggression.

The anxiety to which these inner feelings give rise is more difficult to recognize than fear of tangible objects. It is as a rule disguised in behaviour that is misleading to any but a trained person. Being excessively good is often as symptomatic as aggression or lethargy. It is not possible for the teacher to trace unusual behaviour to its source, unless she is a trained psychologist, nor is it necessary. Children have the power of releasing and curing these feelings for themselves in their play. For this purpose they need free play with water, dough, sand, paint and paper and material or objects that can be taken apart and manipulated. The teacher must be ready to recognize symptoms of fear and anxiety and see that the materials by means of which it can be played away are available. She must also give the child abundant evidence that he is loved for himself, believed in and protected by one who is strong and dependable.

The adult can give the child confidence in himself and in his power of winning through if she treats his lapses lightly. If commenting on them at all she should assure him that everybody has accidents and makes mistakes and add "I don't expect it will happen again." When he realizes that the adult believes in him and his good intentions, that she is there to help him to grow strong, anxiety will decrease and he will gradually feel strong enough to conquer any fear.

In helping a child to be brave he should never be encouraged to deny his fear, for this is in a sense a kind of running away from the situation that sets up all kinds of conflicts within the child. To persist in the face of fear may sometimes be dangerous but makes for the strengthening of character. "The brave man is he who recognizes and accepts natural fear due to his instinct of self-preservation, but who persists in spite of his fear. The anxious neurotic mistakes fear for cowardice. Thus

arises the conflict between his instinct and his ego ideal that no man should be a coward. He solves the conflict by suppressing or repressing his fear, and developing some nervous illness which gets him out of his difficulty. . . . The child must learn to accept the situation as it really is, and not as he would like it to be. To quote Hadfield—Know thyself, accept thyself, and be thyself. A child can learn all this, and in addition take pride and pleasure in an individual victory over individual difficulties. He can gain courage and confidence and power to go on in spite of it.”<sup>1</sup>

#### THE PLACE OF LAUGHTER

Laughter is one of the most successful and the best ways of relieving emotional stress and children who are naturally happy are as ready to laugh as to cry. Learning to laugh and using it as a satisfactory “mode of behaviour” in any kind of emergency should be a definite form of training at this period of life. Children laugh readily at queer sounding words and delight to invent them, burlesque toys—especially mechanical toys, men and animals turning somersaults. They also laugh as a relief from strain—a door that bangs suddenly and noisily or a gust of wind that carries off a tablecloth may cause a moment of surprised silence—occasionally accompanied by fear. Then if the teacher laughs they all laugh and find release in doing so. No one can be healthy and normal who does not laugh often and merrily and no day should pass in the nursery school unaccompanied by the happy sound of children’s laughter. “One of the pleasantest things that ever happens—that babbling infectious expression of good spirits and satisfaction with living is one of the rewards of living and working with children.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Howden : *Child Upbringing and the New Psychology*. (Oxford University Press.)

<sup>2</sup> L. Wagoner : *Development of Learning in Young Children*.

If there is an atmosphere of goodwill and joy in the nursery and if the teacher is herself full of quiet content that makes for smiles as well as for ready laughter, this spirit will spread like joyous contagion and will become the key-note of all that happens.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

THE first years of a child's life are spent in the discovery of his world and in adjusting himself to the people and things which constitute it. The way in which development is brought about by the individual's power of adapting himself to his environment has been discussed in previous chapters. In exploring, experimenting and adjusting himself to his material world, the child has a much simpler task than that which confronts him when learning to fit in with people. "Things" are fixed and unchanging. The child can investigate them unemotionally and once he has mastered their main characteristics, can use them as he wills without resistance on their part. His attitude towards them is primarily intellectual, and such emotions as enter into it are the result of his success or failure to achieve victory over them. His degree of adjustment is determined by the extent of his intelligence and skill.

The world of people presents a different and much more complex problem, partly by reason of the different attitude that he brings to its solution and partly by the varied and constantly changing nature of human beings. The child is himself a "complex of countless conditioned reflexes, associated memories, habits and attitudes, which are acquired as a result of his being reared by personal beings."<sup>1</sup>

At the same time he possesses an inner life of his own in which impulses and emotions arise spontaneously and incessantly, seeking outlet and satisfaction in association with people. The human beings with whom he desires

<sup>1</sup> Gesell: *Guidance and Mental Growth in Infant and Child*.

contact, whom he wants to love and sometimes to dominate, are, unlike things, very different from one another and constantly changing. They are actuated by feelings and influences that the child cannot understand or control. He has to face the dual task of learning how to approach people in ways that give him emotional satisfaction and that are, at the same time, socially acceptable. Intelligence and the capacity to learn from experience play a large part in this adjustment but are not all-sufficient. The process involves an organization of the personality as a whole : an organization which must include emotional harmony, control of will, and an ideal of behaviour. Thus in becoming socially adjusted the child forms the pattern of his personality and prepares himself for the complex art of living as a civilized human being. This is therefore a very important aspect of early education. "Personality which seems at first glance to refer only to the individual is seen upon analysis to be a social term. Not only is the child fast or slow, good or bad, trustworthy or faithless, honest or dishonest, a leader or follower in comparison with others, but he also builds these very traits out of his relation with others."<sup>1</sup>

#### SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN INFANCY

The child's social life begins as soon as he is born and definite social behaviour appears early in babyhood. In the space of a few weeks the baby responds to people in a way that is quite different from his reaction to things. By the end of the first month, or soon after he smiles when his mother or nurse speaks to him, and the smile is a "definite social reaction" says Charlotte Bühler, who points out that the child's attitude is positive from the beginning. As he grows he becomes increasingly interested in the adults who attend to him, following them with his eyes, chuckling when they come near.

<sup>1</sup> J. Anderson : *Op. cit.*

Whether they smile or frown, his responsiveness is always positive—smiling and cooing and generally indicating contentment. After about six months he begins to differentiate frowns from smiles, to react negatively to frowns by withdrawing, or crying.

This positive attitude towards life, which the philosopher interprets as indicative of the true nature of man, though it must inevitably undergo trials and storms as the child grows, can be preserved or rudely shattered by the treatment the child experiences at the hands of those on whom he is dependent for food and protection. Social training begins in these days of babyhood influenced by the way his mother deals with him. Her serenity and love can do much to fortify the trust he places in her so completely—an attitude that is later transferred to other adults if it remains unshaken. The child who through the first two or three years of life finds consistency, friendliness and dependability in adults, will be likely to grow up expectant of finding all people kind and loving and because he expects this, he will induce it in those with whom he is brought into contact. Man usually finds in life what he looks for. On the other hand, the child who is mis-handled, whose faith in people is shaken by misunderstanding or an untimely display of emotion or moods, goes forth to life less adventurously. He is apt to be apprehensive in attitude, never very sure of himself nor of the reception he will get. When this is so he frequently becomes shy, withdrawn and does not develop fully.

Until a child is six or seven months old he takes little or no interest in another baby. After that age his interest is as a rule lively. He smiles, tries to touch his little neighbour, offers toys or snatches them and endeavours in various ways to attract his attention. "Before the end of the first year of life practically all forms of social behaviour seen later in life can be observed in embryonic

form. There is domination of one child by another, leadership, involving bullying and submission. There is imitation, co-operation, generosity and selfishness. There is the dog-in-the-manger child who snatches at the other babies' toys, but makes little attempt to play with them. There is the over-generous child who proffers all that he has to others."<sup>1</sup>

Social development during the first year is very much helped when the mother takes time to play with her little one, to talk and sing to him during bathing and dressing and at other times. The child shows his desire for contact with adults in many ways. Sometimes he throws his toys out of his pram for them to pick up, chatters and calls when left. When he begins to walk and talk, the admiration and attention he receives to protect him from harm are very satisfying to him and he runs the danger of becoming the centre round which the household turns. This is in fact an important period of life for character training. The way he is praised or punished, and the extent to which he is allowed to take the centre of the stage may have a determining effect on character. Children must pass through what has been described by Hadfield as the "Eastern potentate" stage, but care should be taken that they are not arrested there. This may result if a child is prevented from living out this phase completely, when a tendency to revert later is created, or by over-indulgence that may lead to an unhealthy prolonging of it after the child should be seeking emotional and social independence. There is many a mother who, unable to bear the thought of losing her baby, prolongs this stage of dependence.

#### THE TWO-YEAR-OLD CHILD IN THE NURSERY SCHOOL

By two years of age when the child enters the nursery

<sup>1</sup> F. Goodenough: *Developmental Psychology*.

school, his newly acquired powers of walking and talking should have had a very stimulating effect on social development. During the next few years this is rapid, helped by the genial family life of the nursery school. Often the child on entry is still absorbed in learning to talk, and he uses this new power to establish and hold contact with both adults and children. He chatters unceasingly and though much of it is in the form of monologue, he likes an audience. "You sit here and watch me," he sometimes commands taking the adult by the hand and leading her to a chair. He brings his toys near and chatters about what he is doing. He does not require nor expect an answer, but he does expect attention. "You are watching?" he may ask at intervals. Long strings of questions flow forth, but neither to these is any answer required. If the adult replies to a question by saying "You tell me," the child will be quite happy to do so provided he believes her to be as interested in the answer as in the question. When first he enters the nursery school he is still, as a rule, more interested in and more responsive to adults than to the other children, which is understandable, for he has already considerable experience of adults and has, generally speaking, learned to trust and depend on them. To him other children are still an unknown quantity. This is specially true in the case of an only or first child when he is inclined to regard them with curiosity, sometimes mixed with fear, and often as rivals for the attention of the adult that he wants to keep for himself. The two-year-old is moreover usually too preoccupied with his own pursuits to take much notice of his little neighbours whom he is inclined to regard rather as things than as people though he may suddenly demonstrate a desire to fondle or kiss them.

There is no aspect of nursery school organization in which wisdom and care are more needful than the provision for these two-year-old children. Their first



adventure into a wider life than they have previously experienced exerts a powerful influence on social behaviour during nursery school days and on social development generally. These young children should be in small groups, six or eight at most for the first few weeks, and under the care of a knowledgeable and loving teacher with whom they will feel secure and well "mothered." The transition from the intimacy of home life to the nursery school, especially if the school is a large one, can be a very alarming experience and unless it is well guarded the child may receive a shock that is definitely harmful. The presence of an older brother or sister or neighbour in the small group, who can take charge of the newcomer at meals or sleep time often eases the situation.

If these first few weeks in which the child forms his attitude towards people outside his home circle are happy, he goes onwards to wider contacts fearlessly and with joyful expectation, so that by the end of his nursery days he is buoyant and sociable, ready for the friendship forming stage that lies ahead. If on the contrary the beginning is an unhappy one, either because the child feels lost or lonely, or because he is frightened by the numbers and the boisterous behaviour of big children of five, future contacts are less readily sought and are likely to rest on a less secure footing. Many a timid two-year-old who may also be distressed by the crying of others of his own age has to "go through it" where numbers are too large for the teacher to give the individual care and attention necessary. Insecure on his feet he may easily be pushed over, his toys snatched by domineering children and loss of bladder control resulting from nervousness and other emotional causes, may add to his misery. Such an unhappy beginning, almost inevitable when there are many in the group, may have two consequences. It may hinder the spirit of social adventure and create a tendency to solitary play and release in fantasy, or it may

lead to a desire to take it out of some other child more timid than himself. A feeling of inferiority frequently leads to bullying and even to brutality in later years. Unless he is adequately protected, the formerly timid baby often becomes a tease and a bully, and so a vicious circle is established that undermines the beneficial effects that should result from nursery school life. When, from the first moment, children are made to feel welcome, happy and protected, as happens in most nursery schools, the child adopts this friendly attitude towards the other children and by four or five years of age habitually assumes the role of big brother or sister to the younger ones, delighting in caring for them. When the four-year-olds are rough and quarrelsome, the reason can usually be traced to their experience in the reception group.

#### THE WAY OF DEVELOPMENT

The desire for friendly contact with other children grows rapidly during the ensuing years. The tentative gestures—smiling and proffering toys, soon lead to watching and following one another around. One often sees them walking about hand in hand both talking, though not necessarily listening to the other. Their approaches are frequently experimental, becoming skilful only as a result of experience. This clumsiness is met on their own terms, and children have a way of settling things between them that is natural and entirely suited to their level of development. Adults are often in too great a hurry to make children friendly and co-operative, but sociability, like all learning, must wait upon maturation. If children are left free to make their own advances to one another in their own way, the result is always more satisfactory than when they are persuaded by adults to play together. The plan, in operation at some schools, of letting the big ones choose little ones for their special

*Timothy at 20 months  
explores alone*



*Two-year-olds enjoy helping  
others but sometimes resist  
being helped*



*Progress in sociability: from solitary play and tussles to co-operation*

care, looking after them at meals, bedtime and taking them for rides in wagons, etc., provided this is not overdone, helps very much in the creation of friendliness. Two-year-olds will often play more freely with four-year-olds than with the other two-year-olds. This makes the four-year-olds feel very grown up and responsible which awakens protectiveness and love as they care for the little ones. This intercourse should take place occasionally during the day for those who desire it but too much of it is not good for either. The four-year-olds have their own interests into which the younger ones cannot enter and their development is hampered if they are denied the kind of play needed for their special needs. If, in addition, they are of the managing type, too much opportunity to look after others might over-develop this tendency. The younger child also needs time to himself in which to become self-reliant and often these little ones show no special desire to be mothered. Many of them are very independent and it is instructive to see how the older children will adapt themselves to their vagaries remarking, "He is only a little one—he doesn't know yet."

#### INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Children vary very much in the speed with which they settle down into the ways of nursery schools. Some feel at home from the earliest moment, entering into everything wholeheartedly and enjoying everyone that comes their way. Such children have the qualities of "good mixers." There are others who are in trouble from the first day. Sometimes these are aggressive or "spoilt" children who snatch and bully and are the cause of quarrelling and unsocial behaviour generally, arousing hostility wherever they go. Often, however, it is the timid frightened child who arouses hostility and bad behaviour. His own fearful attitude, his ready tears, the

ease with which he can be pushed over and his inability to stand up for himself, seem to awake in others a perverse desire to tease. A mother's darling or a boy with long curls and girlish clothes often becomes the butt of others who persecute him in much the same way as chickens peck at a sickly member of the hen-coop.

Charlotte Bühler groups children into three main types: the socially blind, socially independent and socially dependent. "The socially blind infant behaves in the presence of another child as if nobody were present. He looks at the other child without emotion, takes his toys, plays, moves, without regard for him, not interested in him at all. The socially dependent child is deeply impressed by the other child's presence and activity. He can be either inhibited or stimulated by it. In the first case he will not move, will watch the child and copy him, and give signs of fear before him. In the second case he will display in front of the other child, will demonstrate objects and gestures and will try to arouse the other's attention. He observes the effect of his behaviour on the other and carefully watches the other's reaction. The socially independent child is he who, though aware of the other's presence and responsive to his behaviour, yet does not seem to depend on him and is neither intimidated nor inspired. He reacts to the other child, warns him off if necessary, but never behaves aggressively himself. He may, or may not, join the other in play, though sometimes he even consoles the other, encouraging him and taking part in his activities. Yet with all these he remains independent in his movements."<sup>1</sup>

These three types are familiar to all nursery teachers but anyone who has watched the remarkable social

<sup>1</sup> Ch. Bühler: *Social Behaviour of the Child* in Handbook of Child Psychology. Edit. Carl Murchison. (Clark Uni. Press also Oxford University Press.)

development that takes place in children when the Nursery School is wisely conducted, is tempted to ask whether these types are fixed and final. Are they the result of constitutional factors, or, can they not be more truly described as due to potentialities that have either been inherited or partially developed through early experience and susceptible of being modified by education? On the whole a child who is socially dependent if given opportunities to strengthen his self-dependence and awaken real objective interests usually ceases to insist upon an audience. The child who is socially blind from whatever cause when given a daily chance to help, as in serving meals, carrying trays, sweeping, dusting, arranging flowers, bed making and generally helping to get things ready for others, becomes aware of other children and their needs and at least partially conscious even if he never becomes socially full-sighted. Much research is needed before it can be said that the person, who in childhood appears socially blind is destined to go through life self-absorbed and permanently insensitive to the feelings of others, or that those who in their earliest days are socially dependent cannot learn to become unattached.

#### A SPIRIT OF EXPERIMENT

At the beginning of their nursery school days children approach one another in the same spirit of experiment that they use in investigating things. They have yet to learn customary procedure and whereas adults use speech to ask for or to refuse things, children resort to action. They just take or try to take what they want with the result that they are frequently slapped, pushed and screamed at by the child approached. In such cases behaviour is as a rule free from serious hostility or unfriendliness and seldom arouses either. It is often amazing to the adult who so quickly becomes resentful, to note how a child whose toys have been snatched or who has been pushed will sit

beside the aggressor and continue to play quite unmoved. There are of course frequent incidents that reveal hostility and jealousy, but such outbursts are short-lived. A quick flare-up, pushing, hitting, a few tears and all is at peace again. In these early years children often need direct and explicit teaching as is given when they are taught how to dress or undress, to ladle soup, etc. They need to be told "It is better to do this" —or "I think Joan will let you see it if you ask her" or "That is Peter's waggon. He had it first. You can have it when he has finished with it" —or "you can find another in the cupboard."

The cupboards of two to three-year-old children should contain replicas of favourite toys as at that age children have not learned to wait turns, while the desire for possession is keen and leads to much quarrelling. Criticism or scolding should in such cases be absent. The teacher must relate behaviour to stage of growth, and where help is needed, she should give it by direct teaching and never be fault-finding. It is only through careful showing many times repeated, and through constant experience that children acquire suitable behaviour. Gradually they learn to respect the rights of others, to refrain from spoiling others' play and to fit in with a group. There are many changes of social behaviour between two and five years of age as children "progress from socially indifferent infants through the stage of self-assertion and interference with the liberties of others to a period in which they show consideration, sympathy and kindness for others. When that is reached they delight in group play, and co-operate with one another for mutual enjoyment. They then show real concern for the approval or disapproval of others and express their own appreciation or the contrary in words rather than in actions."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> K. Bridges : *Op. cit.*



A good deal of experimental hostility, much of which arises from social interest, is evident at three or thereabouts. At that age children want to discover what others will do under different circumstances and how much power they can exercise over them. Experimental hair-pulling, punching, pushing, is indulged in, not with a feeling of unfriendliness, so much as with real curiosity or sometimes in a spirit of fun. Snatching of toys and running away with them, knocking over another child's building, occur frequently then, and are usually done with one eye on the reaction produced. The desire, in many cases, is to establish contact, not to arouse aggression. It is the teacher's task to help the child thus approached to appreciate the spirit of the other child's action and also to help the experimenter to discover ways of approach that are more socially acceptable. Children vary very much in their reactions to such behaviour. Some of them turn the incident into a game, proceed to chase the offender, with laughter and good-humoured puppy-like wrestling that both enjoy. Some children on the other hand become aggressive when interfered with and hit back, either by attacking the offender or his property. Others give way to violent temper tantrums and seek on such occasions adult protection tearfully.

The teacher must always be on the watch to keep these approaches good-humoured and to encourage the children to see the fun of it all. Laughter is very infectious and a good solvent. The more real fun children have and the more spontaneous their laughter, the more rapid will be their social development, for there is always a tendency to repeat what is enjoyed.

On the whole children quickly learn to settle their own differences and in doing so make more rapid and satisfactory progress in social adjustment than when the responsibility is taken from them by adult intervention. The following incident is an illustration of this. Three-

year-old Jean was adopted at about two and a half by a very devoted, middle-aged couple, after spending her early life in an institution. She was extremely anti-social towards all other children whom she appeared to regard as natural enemies. When she first entered a nursery school, if another child watched her at play, or stood near her table, it was enough to arouse her wrath. She would scream and push him away. One day when Jean was experimenting with a tricycle, Mary, a very good-humoured and sociable little girl of about the same age, watched for a time and then said, "I'll pull you!" and seized the handle-bars. In an instant Jean, leaning forward, gave Mary so violent a push that she was knocked down. This was to Mary quite a new experience and one that so amused and surprised her that she burst into merry laughter as she rose and went again to the tricycle, saying, "Do it again!" Jean did, a little more tentatively, but Mary threw herself down, kicking up her heels and laughing merrily. Again and again she reappeared, "Again!" Jean appeared very mystified. Her punches grew less violent—Mary "fell down" more boisterously until both children were laughing heartily. The teacher did not witness this incident—and could hardly believe her eyes when on looking she saw Mary with a skipping-rope over the handle-bars, pulling Jean along—both of them laughing and playing together. Mary's unfailing good-humour, and Jean's own laughter and fun had broken the ice for her. Gradually she learned to play with other children and outgrew her aggressive habits in the pleasure she found with them.

It is the teacher's responsibility to make and maintain a feeling of goodwill and friendliness in the little community and while leaving the children free for their experiments, to prevent aggressive behaviour from being harmful either to the aggressor or his victim. Success in any kind of behaviour even if it comes by chance

will lead to its repetition, and the child who acquires the habit of leading may become a leader in time. On the other hand the child who derives pleasure from anti-social behaviour will continue to be anti-social. In late years much delinquency is due to the satisfaction it gives the child to be anti-social—to dodge police and outwit adults.

John, a very timid two-year-old, had spent the first week at a nursery school clinging to his teacher. He would neither play with other children nor with toys. At the beginning of the second week, though still firmly attached to his teacher, he began to watch other children and on one occasion walked up to a three-to-four-year-old called Peggy who was playing with a doll and stood watching her. Peggy took no notice of him. Suddenly he pulled the brightly coloured bow from her hair. Peggy began to cry. John looked surprised and watched with interest until she ceased crying and began to play again, still taking no notice of John. Thereupon he took a firm grip of Peggy's hair and pulled it. Peggy yelled and John who had been tearful himself and always solemn began to laugh heartily. He stood near Peggy laughing until she ceased crying—then pulled again and laughed again at her tears. Afterwards he approached another little girl, pulling her hair and was very amused at her yells. A third was treated similarly. None of the three-year-olds made an attempt at self-defence, they just yelled as though they were puppets set in motion and John walked from one to another pulling hair and laughing merrily. It was his first approach to other children and there appeared to be neither hostility nor unfriendliness in his action. It was an inexpert invitation to play that was not successful. But his first social experiment had proved amusing and there is no doubt it would be repeated should opportunity occur. Had any of the children attacked John or defended themselves the result would have been very different.

The other side of this incident must not, however, be lost sight of. Though John's intentions were apparently not unsocial, should he continue to approach children in this way and find pleasure in their tears, he might begin to enjoy and to practice anti-social behaviour especially if it gave him a keener sense of power. The incident was typical of egocentric behaviour often seen in young children, so well described by Dr. Isaacs when she said "The essence of the egocentric attitude is that it involves a recognition of the presence of other children but not of their personalities or independent purposes. The one child needs and uses the other for his own satisfaction. . . . In the beginning it is implicitly assumed that the other will accept the role assigned."<sup>1</sup>

#### LEARNING TO PLAY TOGETHER.

One of the reasons for the popularity of the nursery school is the fact that it gives children an opportunity to associate with others of the same age where there is a leeway for the individual to withdraw from the group and carry on schemes of play without interruption. "We find that quite intensive social play like hauling each other in wagons seems to reach a point of spontaneous disruption. Without coming to a climax it subsides and is usually followed by a period of quiet during which each child is employed at some individual activity such as play in sand, or block building, etc. Throughout the nursery school age this characteristic remains typical of the children. It is one that should be encouraged since it protects them from the strain of sustaining too long periods of accommodating to the demands of social contact."<sup>2</sup>

As a step towards group play children have periods

<sup>1</sup> Susan Isaacs: *Social Development in Young Children*. (G. Routledge and Sons, Ltd.)

<sup>2</sup> K. Bridges: *Op. cit.*

of what has been called parallel play. Two or three of them will choose the same play material, tools, blocks or dough and collect together. They appear to be playing together but in reality each is pursuing his own game regardless of the other. They are influenced and stimulated by one another's proximity, there is frequent imitation of one another, but it is in no sense group play. These early experiences of playing near each other are limited and occasional, but because children enjoy this "togetherness," such play provides the soil out of which co-operative play springs.

As children discover the value of one another as companions and playmates, the habit of playing together is established and groups of three and four are formed. Children join together in a game or in making things and thus begin to subordinate their own desires to those of others. An element of give and take appears. They learn to await their turn, to share, to lead and follow, to assert or accept as the group needs. There is usually a group leader and the teacher must see that all have an opportunity for leadership and to develop both passive and active qualities. A balanced character is one in which what is called maleness and femaleness are equally developed. Social play can do much towards character development if all children have an opportunity to lead as well as to follow, to dominate and to submit.

Social and emotional development are closely inter-related. The child's social world awakens in him love and tenderness for others and a desire to be loved. It also arouses jealousy and hostility as well as the incentive for the control of these emotions. The child, eager to play with others finds that tears are less effective than smiles; that temper tantrums bring no helpful solution; that it is more successful to wait for a thing than to snatch it. Friendships are formed—groups of three or four may play together perhaps for many days or only

occasionally. Large groups are seldom formed and children do not begin to work and play as a team until eight or nine years of age. For this reason collective games are few and short in the nursery school. They are introduced chiefly with the intention of providing children with a rest from planning and being responsible for themselves and as a form of relaxation and amusement. It is doubtful if they contribute greatly to social development, but if they are really good fun, they induce a desire to play together.

#### ATTITUDE TOWARDS ADULTS

During nursery years the child undergoes a change in his attitude towards adults as marked though quite different from the change in his attitude towards children. In the latter case he progresses from indifference towards friendliness and by the end of the nursery school years he has developed a liking for co-operative play and begins to form real friendships. With the adult the process is reversed. At two years of age the child is very attached to and dependent on his teacher. From this clinging dependence he passes through a phase of resistance to adults and their requests eventually reaching an attitude of general friendliness of the somewhat non-attached kind. He delights to assume the position of the teacher's right-hand and comes to regard her rather as a colleague. As his capacity for friendship with children strengthens, he depends less and less on the teacher. A change of teacher at four or five matters much less than at two when it seems like the loss of real support and security. Though the four-year-old child is less dependent on the teacher—or perhaps because of it—he will ask for and accept help from her in a way that he rarely does at three. In doing so he shows that he has acquired an attitude towards authority that is both sound and healthy. Though a child's chief concern is to acquire

skill in his social behaviour with other children, it is important for him to form an attitude towards adults that will make him neither a slave nor a rebel. The easy friendliness that exists between children and teachers in the nursery school is very satisfactory. It is what Wagoner calls "a two-way process out of which develops a mutual respect and appreciation."<sup>1</sup>

The teacher must, by the atmosphere she creates and the general arrangements she introduces, devote herself to the task of making sociable and not unsociable acts enjoyable. Every child must be made to feel that he has a place, is loved and expected to be helpful to all. The teacher's own behaviour towards every child and towards her own colleagues can do much by unfailing courtesy, and gentleness, to create an atmosphere that awakens this behaviour in children. She can also help by joining in the children's play and giving it a turn that brings in other children or that gives it a social direction. The right suggestions at opportune moments which call out playful response, and are given with psychological insight, can often turn potential aggression into protection and encourage timid children to make sociable approaches to one another.

<sup>1</sup> Lovisa Wagoner: *Observation of Young Children*. (McGraw Hill Publishing Co.).

## CHAPTER IX

### RELIGION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

A STUDY of the history of mankind from the primitive state to civilization reveals one characteristic common to man at every stage of his evolution—the impulse to worship. The religious spirit, which finds expression in many forms, is as definitely part of human nature as the upright position, hands and speech. Thus in a normally growing child the impulse arises inevitably, and, if the environment is favourable, grows into religious conviction and a spiritual outlook on life.

#### THE CHILD'S ATTITUDE

During the pre-school years, qualities and attitudes that are the soil in which the religious impulse grows, appear naturally. Whether or not they develop into the fullness of religious faith depends on the adults with whom the child is associated in his impressionable years. It depends upon their response to the child, the attitude towards life that they reveal, and the nature of the experiences they make possible for him. The characteristics that arise so naturally are fourfold. There is love of these adults, and faith in them, and the implicit belief that they will give both love and protection. The child has a positive attitude towards life and towards his elders; he lives by admiration, hope and love, never expecting anything but good to come to him. There is also a growing awareness of himself which brings with it the birth of conscience; a compelling impulse to discover the how and why of things, and the feeling of awe and wonder. These are characteristic of every normal child. It is the duty of parents and teachers to strengthen and develop these potentialities so that they may ripen into



spiritual faith, a sense of ethical values, a desire for truth and the capacity for worship.

Adults can help children's religious development in two ways. The most important way, particularly in early childhood, is by the example of their own lives and characters. It is this that creates the first, deepest and most lasting impression, not only because it comes while the child is in an impressionable period of its life, but also because as a rule it is given unconsciously. One cannot analyse the power of an unselfish character, but "there can be no doubt about its reality, and there seems to be no limit to its range."<sup>1</sup> The other way is by explicit teaching. This comes after pre-school days, though a limited amount of teaching can be given to children even in their earliest years.

#### INDIRECT TRAINING

The basis of religious training is laid in babyhood and is inspired by the character of the mother on whom the child is dependent and from whom he gets his first impressions. She is the bountiful giver of all, it is to her that he looks for love, for protection, and it is for her that he feels his first love, trust and belief. The way in which the mother tends the infant, gives him the breast and later weans him from it, her handling of him as she bathes and changes him, all affect the child emotionally, either giving him a sense of happiness and peace, of safety and security, or causing fear, unhappiness and distrust.

Later, when the child begins to walk and acquires a degree of independence, he becomes aware of himself as a person, capable of defiance or acceptance of others. He then reaches a stage in which his need of the assurance of love and understanding is great, for the independent outlook is based on a confident attitude towards life and trust

<sup>1</sup> Paget: *The Hallowing of Work*.

in the reliability of people and things. If his adult world fails him, if people are despotic or insincere, the basis of the child's religious outlook is weakened. He becomes negative in his attitude, fearful, and defensive rather than trustful. It is doubtful if a child who has never felt safe or secure, nor known the peace that protective love brings, can ever develop that implicit love of God and trust in His never-failing care and guidance that are fundamental to religious belief.

It is moreover important for him to realize that love is a protective armour that gives strength and courage but never restricts or hampers and that he must give love, if he would have it. "For the little child in a good home the Kingdom comes (as it does for us) in mutual love. It comes in experience of beauty, and the wordless thanksgiving for happiness."<sup>1</sup>

The teacher's attitude must reveal at every moment of the day her trust in him. She should make it clear to him on the many occasions when his behaviour is unsatisfactory that it is his conduct and not himself of which she disapproves, and that she expects him soon to be able to do better because she knows him to be animated by helpful motives. By avoiding personal criticism and giving instead direct teaching of more suitable behaviour, the teacher will help the child to desire good standards and be confident of his power to achieve them. If the teacher has made a study of growth, she will understand that much conduct that is unsatisfactory from an adult point of view is so, either because of the child's lack of experience, or because of the strength of emotions which he has not learnt to control. Her task is to help him to acquire better modes of behaviour and to give opportunity for expression of deep impulses, recognizing that the fount from which they spring is intrinsically good.

<sup>1</sup> Helen Wodehouse: *The Scripture Lesson in the Elementary School*, (S.C.M. Press, Ltd.)

The impulses are natural, it is only the way in which they are expressed that is unsatisfactory. If in addition she is always just and fair in her dealings, if she always keeps her promises and is strictly truthful in her statements, the impression the child gets of adult conduct will help him in forming his own conduct and strengthen the foundations of religious belief.

"He will get a conception of goodness because you are good to him and to other people . . . of truth because you are unfailingly truthful, of kindness of speech because your words and your tones are never harsh ; of constancy because you always keep your promise, of consideration for others and unselfishness because he sees these things in you. You cannot speak to him of these abstract virtues, but when he can understand the meaning of these words, he will already know that he has understood them all the time, and that you are only giving him the dress of words to living things he has already learned. Long before you can talk to him of God in such a way as he can understand your words—if indeed we ourselves know or can know anything more of Him than the fringe of Himself—he will understand something of God because of you."<sup>1</sup>

All understanding must rest upon a basis of experience and as has already been shown in earlier chapters it is useless to try to develop an intellectual conception of anything before the child has lived with the reality of it. For example, he must have long experience of handling and experimenting with quantities, proportions, sizes, shapes, and relationships before he is ready to translate this practical knowledge into abstract calculations of arithmetic or mathematics. He must be fluent of speech and capable of expressing himself adequately before he studies grammar. So also he must live and experience

<sup>1</sup> H. W. Fox : *The Child's Approach to Religion*. (Williams and Norgate Ltd.)

goodness, truth, courage, patience, gentleness, courtesy, unselfishness, faith, trust and love, before he can ever associate them with the spiritual source from which they come or understand them as virtues. It is much the same road that is travelled in acquiring speech and the meaning of words. Gradually the child understands the use of words that interpret experience. For example, colour means in the first instance blue colour or green colour associated with some familiar toy, shape means round shape or square shape, also associated with familiar objects. With experience, and as the child sees these qualities in different relationships, he becomes able to think of and to use the words colour and shape as abstract qualities, not necessarily associated with any particular object. So, too, with experience, "to the spirit of love, courage, faithfulness, truth, beauty, or to the Author and Giver of all these, we teach him the name of God."<sup>1</sup>

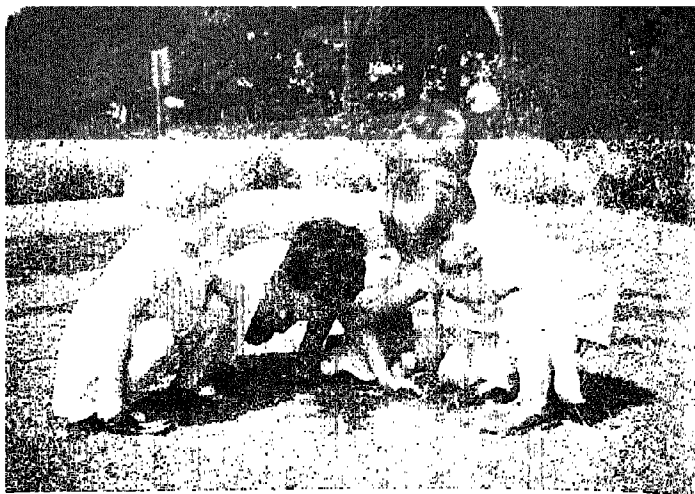
#### THE TEACHER'S OUTLOOK

The first act of the teacher of young children, who desires, as every teacher must, to help a child's religious development, should be concerned with her own character. Dean Inge has said that religion is caught not taught, and it is a well-accepted fact that the teacher influences children more by what she is than by what she says. She must first discover her own convictions, deepen her own experience and become a genuine seeker after truth. Any religious teaching, whether direct or indirect, is inevitably bound up with the teacher's own philosophy of life, and it is important for every teacher and student to think profoundly about the mystery and wonder of existence. She should endeavour to realize something of the stupendous universe of which she is so small a part and the evidences of Mind, Purpose

<sup>1</sup> H. Wodehouse : *Op. cit.*



*Wonder is the beginning of worship*



*"Look at our worm!"*

*Enjoying the lavender*



and Love that are revealed abundantly to those whose spiritual eyes are opened.

Religious teaching is by far the most delicate and subtle work that the teacher is called upon to do. It cannot any more than any other aspect of education be imparted by the light of nature alone. It makes demands upon intelligence as well as upon devotion. The teacher should study deeply and read widely philosophical and religious literature. She should know the Bible well, for it is in itself a library of wisdom, full of beauty, poetry and drama. There are few things that arouse the impulse to worship more quickly than the gospels and some of the psalms.

The teacher should spare some time every day for devotional reading and thinking which are as necessary to keep her spirit alive, as daily food is for maintaining physical existence. All real thinking should be done alone, and in silence. It involves not only intellectual activity but the spiritual exercises of meditation and contemplation. To achieve this the whole being must be tuned in to the Voice of the Spirit and the attitude become one of listening and waiting. There is so much to be done every day that is practical and useful in the busy routine of the school, that it is necessary at intervals to see all these practical, useful things in their true perspective, to lay aside the business of Martha and to become Mary for a time. Only thus will everything be recognized at its true value and be neither exaggerated nor underestimated. "The teacher must possess the habit of looking up and beyond the frontiers of the useful and obvious, and finding beyond the frontiers a beloved Reality which gives significance to the useful and the obvious. To be able to do this is to possess the spirit of worship without which no one can educate in the true sense."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Evelyn Underhill: *Education and the Spirit of Worship*. Winifred Mercier Memorial Lecture at Whitelands College, 1937.

Religious education is not one aspect of education. It is rather an attitude and a spirit that pervades and irradiates everything that takes place during the day. As Dr. L. P. Jacks once said "Unless it is present in all we teach it is not effectively present in anything we teach."<sup>1</sup>

The teacher who habitually looks "beyond the frontier of the useful" to Spiritual Reality will understand the deep springs from which the impulse rises that prompts the child's "how, why and if" play, and she will be better able to help him in his investigations than one who takes a shorter view. Although the child's immediate objective in play is the solution of present problems—such as how his bricks can be made to balance, or why he cannot make his rubber ball float like a balloon—the impulse that prompts this play arises from the same spring that sends the adult towards philosophy and religion. The child is a seeker after truth and reveals this in his play and his questions. Granted right experience, which it is the teacher's duty to bring within his reach, every truth discovered becomes the starting point of a fresh quest, until Truth itself becomes detached from particular situations and is seen as holding "wrapped within itself a whole philosophy which unfolds gradually and never comes to an end."

### DIRECT TRAINING

Fundamental as is the unconscious influence of the teacher's character there is much that she must do consciously if the seeds sown by unconscious influence are to fructify. The aim of religious teaching has been well expressed by K. Penzer<sup>2</sup> by quoting the answer given in

<sup>1</sup> L. P. Jacks—Lecture on Religious Education given at Conference on New Ideals in Education, 1927.

<sup>2</sup> K. Penzer: *The Scripture Lesson in the Elementary School and Kindergarten*. (S.C.M. Press.)



the shorter Scottish Catechism to the question "What is the chief end of man?" The answer is "To glorify God and enjoy Him for ever." "There can hardly be a more lovely aim" (of scripture teaching) she writes, "than this most wonderful answer."

There are many ways in which the child can be helped "to enjoy God," and while it is true that all experiences must meet the child's immediate needs and understanding, it is also important to remember that if the child is to learn to adapt the religion of childhood to the demands of adolescence and adult life (and to enjoy God for ever) his childhood's religion must have two essentials. In the first place there should be nothing in it that is fixed and final; secondly, it must contain nothing that has to be unlearned. It must be of a kind that widens and deepens as the child grows and develops, otherwise it will soon be outgrown and discarded. Spiritual growth cannot be hurried. Every incident, gesture and word that helps to set the child thinking and feeling in a way that makes for God-consciousness becomes permanently a part of his character. The teacher must not, however, look for results or expect to see the fruits of her teaching while the child is still in the stage of infancy. She is concerned only with the seed-time, not with the harvest, and if she tries to get "results" from her religious training she will defeat her whole aim. "What you are aiming at is to produce a character saturated and not merely tinged or colourwashed with the right idea of God, and all that is bound to take time. Do not force religious growth. You are planting acorns, not mushroom spawn."<sup>1</sup>

#### THROUGH NATURE STUDY

The most natural way to help a child to enjoy God is through the world of nature. The response is immediate.

<sup>1</sup> H. W. Fox: *Op. cit.*

Children all love flowers, delight to tend them in the garden and to arrange them in vases. They love, too, insects, animals and birds, and the nursery school should be rich in opportunity for getting to know and care for young and tender things, ants and worms as well as butterflies and birds. There should be many kinds of pets, not kept in cages, but living as naturally as possible, so that the child may learn to regard them not as play-mates for himself but as creatures living their own lives which it is his duty to protect. It is also important that the same attitude should be inculcated towards flowers which do not merely exist for the pleasure of people. From the beginning he should be taught to handle both plants and animals with respect. If the teacher's own approach is reverent it will not be necessary for her to say anything. Her way of handling them will promote a sense of the wonder and holiness of living things and will speak more eloquently than any words can do. "The world into which you introduce your pupils will be, roughly speaking, the world which you yourself apprehend. Unless you have developed in yourself the instinct for beauty, the sacredness the deep meaning of nature, you will not make anyone else feel this."<sup>1</sup>

No nursery school or class should be without its garden, and this should be as large and as beautiful as possible. It is part of the child's educational environment and should be planned to stimulate and to nurture aesthetic and spiritual development, to foster scientific interests as well as to provide a playground. One can scarcely exaggerate the value of spending much time in the garden during childhood and of discovering the many wonderful living things within it. There is something deeply moving about the influence of nature, the feel of the soil, scent and colour of flowers and about growth itself, impossible to describe but understood by all who

<sup>1</sup> Evelyn Underhill : *Op. cit.*

have experienced it. Children born and bred in city streets who never know anything more of nature than flowers in vases, are definitely poorer, though even cut flowers tenderly cared for can open the gates of Heaven. In addition to the washing of vases and refilling them with fresh water before the flowers are replaced, the watering of young plants, cleaning of the goldfishes' bowl and the aquarium, there should always be in a nursery school nature tables on which children can watch germinating seeds and growing plants. When the teacher spends time herself, daily watching and enjoying these things, the children will soon gather round to see what she is looking at. As they watch the water-boatmen skimming on the surface of the water, and the water-spider taking her bag of air below it, the teacher can, by drawing attention to the marvellous mechanism and instinctive knowledge of each creature, help the child to become aware of the protective love and foresight operative in the creation of all creatures. Children are very quick to feel awe and wonder, and the teacher must help to cultivate this, encouraging them to watch things for as long as they wish and to enjoy the things they watch. "Contemplation" said one of the earliest mystics is "loving sight" and in learning to watch "lovingly" children are also learning to worship. By their expression as well as by the questions they ask they show how much they are loving and wondering. "Is it really and truly the caterpillar that went to sleep that has turned into this lovely moth? How did it make its wings?" "How does the bulb drink all the water when it hasn't a mouth?" "Why don't tadpoles want to stay being tadpoles?" "Do the frogs wish they had their tails still?"—such questions are not easy to answer. When the teacher does not know the answer, or does not know how to give it in a way that will be comprehensible to the child, she must honestly say so. "There are so many things we

don't understand," she can reply, "but people are learning much by watching things. God wants us to love all these darling things, and if we watch them long enough and patiently enough, He helps us to see and understand, but it takes a long time and a lot of watching!"

There are many ways in which the teacher can help to keep alive that feeling of wonder which awakens the spirit of worship, both in herself and in the children she teaches. She ought to be able to give her children something of her belief that there is a great Mind and a Creative force at work, a God whom we can love even though we cannot understand Him, and who makes not only the beauty we see around us, but gives us also the power to enjoy it. We can, and we must love and worship Him and give Him our thanks. In gratitude, in praise and in the desire to discover more and more of the mystery that lies behind life, lie the germ of religious feeling.

The phrase, "the teacher can keep alive the feeling of wonder" is used advisedly, for this emotion arises spontaneously in the child if he is surrounded by beautiful things which others revere. The teacher does not have to make a child religious, and possibly the less she actually says the better. Her task is to encourage the growth of what is rising naturally. "Heaven lies about us in our infancy" and there is no doubt that the child often sees with a clearer spiritual vision and understands with a keener sensitiveness things unattainable to the adult.

#### PRAYER

There are usually children in every nursery school who have been taught some form of prayer. But there are frequently a greater number to whom this is a new experience, and the question arises as to when to appoint

a prayer time and what sort of prayers to use. Should the teacher "kiss the joy as it flies," to use Blake's phrase, and have prayers when the moment seems opportune, which might occur more than once on some days and not at all on others? Should there on the other hand be a regular time to say "Thank you" every day? It would seem advisable to have both a regular time for "Thank you" and also to seize special times, provided neither is forced and that both arise as a real expression of joy or gratitude. When the children are gathered together to tell their news, as happens some time every day in most nursery schools, it seems natural that a "Thank you" should be included. The news itself always includes things for which thanks can be given—sick children have come back to school, the rain has come to water the garden, or the sun to make it grow. Perhaps somebody saw a butterfly, or there are flowers in the vases; or it may be someone has a new baby brother or new shoes. "Can we say thank you for comics?" asked one small boy. "'Cos they make me laugh." One of the habits worth cultivating is that of a morning thanksgiving—a time for recollecting the good things that are ours and expressing gratitude for them. Those who have been brought up to do this are fully aware of the value of it and of the happiness with which it begins the day. It is important, however, that in the nursery school the period should not "lose its way in the dreary desert sands of dead habit," for that would be more likely to kill than to quicken religious feeling. It is better to omit a prayer altogether than to have it said except as an expression of feeling or without a prayerful atmosphere.

Prayers should be prepared for by conversation with the children that arouses the desire for thanksgiving. The form of words should be simple, improvised to include all the children wish to give thanks for. They should have meaning for the child and be more than the

repetition of words and phrases he does not understand or to which he can feel no response "Dear God, Thank You for Jimmy's new baby brother and Mary's shoes and the fresh flowers in the vases" is an example of what may be said. A moment of silence before beginning a prayer "just so that we can all think about God before we talk to Him" helps to create an atmosphere, but it should be brief and never forced. It does not matter if the children do not join in the prayer. They will absorb the attitude and the spirit of reverence that never fails to be apparent when this moment is skilfully handled and the teacher is sincere. One little boy returning from his first week in the nursery school taught his "Mummy" how to say her prayers. With his eyes closed and an intent expression upon his face his voice rose and fell as he chanted "Love, love, love, love. . . ." His mother came to the nursery to discover what it meant. "It didn't mean no sense," she said, "but it made me feel like it was a prayer."

Saying "Thank you" for dinner often means more if children know what they are saying thank you for. "Thank you for our meat and pudding," for "our milk," etc. and "Please God give all little boys and girls a good dinner to-day."

The Superintendent of a nursery school relates in an annual report of a picnic lunch while the children were on holiday. All were seated on the ground, the lunch was spread, and everyone was getting ready for "Thank you," when suddenly a piercing voice exclaimed "Look, look at that little ant eating our sandwiches." There was a general scramble across the grass to see this exciting scene of an ant carrying away a crumb almost as large as itself. At last, after they had watched their fill, they were once again nearly ready for the "Thank you" when another child said, "Look at the birdie, does he want some dinner too?" A third, "I can see a moo-cow,"

and a general chorus, "Can you hear the quack-quack ducks?" "We've got a puppy-dog at home." The teacher realized how artificial and meaningless it would be to persist in efforts to quieten the children for prayer when they were all so excited and she remembered:

He prayeth best who loveth best,  
All things both great and small,  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.

So lunch proceeded, to the accompaniment of gay conversation concerning ants, butterflies, cows and robins, the things they like to eat and where they find them, and the teacher told how even the roots of the grass can find their food in the earth. Lunch over, prayer came spontaneously and was full of meaning to the children who said "Thank you" not only for their good dinner and their happy picnic, but also for the food provided for all God's creatures.<sup>1</sup>

"Thank you" can be said at the end of the day instead of at the beginning and the prayer can include an enumeration of the things children have enjoyed that day. To spend a few moments in remembering things they have enjoyed, followed by thanksgiving is to follow the natural order of prayer in which recollection is followed spontaneously by the desire to worship.

There are many suitable prayers that can be learned such as "God bless Mummy, Daddy, brothers and sisters." There should be many "God bless" and "Thank you" prayers.

## STORIES

Stories should be chosen with care, and free from anything that might give an erroneous impression about God or anything that may have to be unlearned. Few

<sup>1</sup> Nancy Quayle: Report on Children's House Nursery School, Bow

Old Testament stories are suitable for young children. "Most of the Old Testament is unchristian, all of it is pre-Christian, and as such is not suitable as a beginning to religious knowledge. To understand and appreciate the Old Testament stories necessitates not only a knowledge of the Bible, but also the social and political life of the period they represent and something of the truth they are intended to symbolize. These matters are beyond the comprehension of the little child, who needs the simplest narrative and one that gives the truer idea of God than these stories are likely to do."<sup>1</sup> The New Testament with its stories about Jesus is more suitable, but even these stories need to be chosen with care. They should show the kindness and tenderness of Jesus for anyone in trouble, and His wonderful power of helping. These are the simplest to understand and they give the truest impression of Him.

The miracles are best omitted. They suggest magic, and thus give a totally false impression, and one that has to be unlearned before the true comprehension can be gained. In telling stories about Jesus and His desire to cure the sick and sorrowful the aim should be to give an impression of goodness, kindness and love, and to show the way in which these qualities in Jesus enabled Him to make people better and happier.

"There is an extraordinary infectious quality about goodness, whether we see it or hear it; it somehow stirs our ambitions to go and to do the same thing," and the child who translates all impressions so quickly into action, begins to play that he is Jesus. Children tend to identify themselves with those they love and admire, and consciously and unconsciously to weave the character of the loved one into the fabric of their own being. Stories of Jesus that show Him as kind and gentle to children always loving and helpful, provided they are vivid and

<sup>1</sup> H. W. Fox: *Op. cit.*



free from sentimentality, give the child an intimate picture of a very lovable person whom they want to be like.

The story of the Nativity—the shepherds following the star and the coming of the Kings—is undoubtedly the loveliest narrative ever told, and because everybody loves it the story is frequently told to young children. Nevertheless it is probably wiser not to tell it until they know and love Jesus as a man. Children's emotional attitude towards babies is very different from their feelings for a beloved adult, and one wants the children to think of Jesus as the protective adult. Fox stresses this and suggests that once they know Him thus and think of Him as a Friend, the story of the Nativity, "seems to have the same effect as finding the last piece of a difficult puzzle. The whole picture suddenly appears vivid and convincing not in so many fragments, but as a complete unity. The people of Jesus's time loved Him as a man, and probably hardly anyone knew of the circumstances of His birth."<sup>1</sup>

When telling Bible stories it is advisable to begin in a way that distinguishes them immediately from other stories. "Once upon a time" suggest a make-believe story. Bible stories should be different in phrasing, and wherever possible, biblical words and phrases should be introduced. They are beautiful in themselves and come to have their own association and meaning.

### TEACHING ABOUT GOD

Is it possible to give children an idea of God that is neither false nor that has to be unlearned because it becomes fixed and final and therefore quickly outgrown? It is very important, as has already been pointed out, for children's earliest religious outlook, feelings and ideas to be of a kind that widen and deepen as the child matures, thus remaining a stable and ever increasing influence on character and behaviour, meaning every

<sup>1</sup> H. W. Fox.: *Op. cit.*

year more and more. Anything that has to be discarded leaves a doubt in the child's mind. Part of the difficulty that adults experience in talking of God to a child is due to their desire to make him understand. They should rather aim at inducing a feeling. It certainly is possible to understand with the heart and with the intuitive sense—so sadly neglected in education—many things that the intellect cannot grasp. Children understand a great deal intuitively that it is impossible for them to comprehend intellectually. As a child once said, "I do understand it all, Mummy, when you don't explain it." There are many people who feel this too, and who are aware that they may lose wisdom in their eagerness for knowledge.

In any case dogmatic teaching and the repeating of creeds should have no place in nursery years. Such teaching cannot be appreciated except as the expression of experience formulated into belief. The solid clay of dogma stamped too heavily around the tender young shoots of the spiritual life is more likely to kill than to strengthen it. Explicit teaching, which means the use of definitely expressed ideas can be effective only after the child knows the truth the words represent. The child must know and experience love before we can talk to him of Love; must feel trust and belief before we can win his Faith; must experience the joy of doing and giving up things for others before we can expect him to understand or even to be dimly aware of that mystic sense in which we are all children of one Father, and one Spirit. "It has been the weakness of much of the education of the past that it was too much a matter of mind and too little of experience; it put head against heart, knowledge against wisdom, theory against experience."<sup>1</sup> Intuitively the child accepts God whom he cannot see as one who loves and takes care of all people,

<sup>1</sup> Graham Howe: *Creative Education*. (Home and School Journal, December 1937.)

and who talks to them when they pause to listen. He is willing to accept the idea that He does not talk as people talk to each other but in His own way, by inspiring thoughts and feelings. Sometimes they can realize that He reminds them of Himself by a lovely colour in the sky, by flowers and trees, by a bird's song.

It is preferable to use the word God, which is soon accepted and gathers an association about it, rather than Father, for the latter word may give a wrong impression. In many homes in which children do not see much of their father, fatherhood stands for something different from the idea of God, the protector and provider of all. It is the mother who usually fills this role, who is the comforter always at hand, who loves and is loved, and whose presence means safety, security and peace. Thus if any word except God is used the child may adopt a false attitude and one that may be hampering to religious faith.

In conclusion one is persuaded that it is indirect more than direct teaching which is needed and if the teacher is herself spiritually alive, there is little doubt the child will catch a spark from her. If in nursery days the child can strengthen his spontaneous love of people and his faith in them, and the tenderness he feels for all living things ; if he can keep alive his awareness of unseen Love, protecting and guiding him, not only will he have a foundation for the religious life, but he will be equipped for living with an armour that will give him a sense of power and protection. He will also acquire an outlook on life so serene and positive that no matter what troubles it brings him, nothing, "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers nor things present nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Romans VIII, v. 38-9

## CHAPTER X

### EDUCATION THROUGH PLAY

PLAY, the most characteristic feature of childhood is the child's natural way of developing himself in body and mind and preparing himself for the serious business of life. It is an activity that arises spontaneously and is similar in type all the world over. Stern speaks of play as originating "in a deep compulsion of human nature that almost brings it into line with the compulsory function of instinct."<sup>1</sup> It is true that the sequence of play interests never varies. Different types of play follow one another, reach their peak, and fade out to be replaced by the next in Nature's well-ordered succession. This sequence is closely related to general development.

Yet, though the child is to this extent under the "levelling influence of universal childhood,"<sup>2</sup> no two children play in exactly the same way. On the contrary every child reveals his nature and tendencies in a way that makes his play individually characteristic and self-expressive.

"To what extent do the play interests of the child to-day foreshadow what he will become to-morrow? What influence have social and emotional experiences gained in one's play as a child upon such qualities as leadership, independence of thought and action, and the ability to get on happily with one's fellows later on? To what extent are the vocational choices, the hobbies and reactions of the adult, the direct outgrowth of the play preferences of childhood? Much further investigation is

<sup>1</sup> Stern : *Op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Stern : *Op. cit.*

needed before these questions can be answered completely, but as we follow the course of development onward, we can see how closely the play life of the individual reflects the development of his whole personality, portrays his interests, his abilities, his past experience. Had we but wisdom to read the signs, we should find in the child's play the surest index of his character."<sup>1</sup>

Not only is play the surest index of a child's character, it is also an indication of the normality of his development and of his mental and emotional health. Every Nursery teacher should continuously watch her children at play, and should keep some record of it. She should also make as comprehensive a study as she can of play itself, for this will enable her to interpret and evaluate her observations, and give some insight into each child and the kind of help and guidance he needs. It will help her to understand when and how to come forward and when to leave him alone. It will also guide her in her choice of the materials and playthings most helpful for each particular phase of growth.

### THE PURPOSE OF PLAY

Play in childhood is more than mere pastime or a means of recreation. It is the serious business of life. It is in a sense part of the food and drink by which the child builds himself in all-round strength and becomes a poised personality. Provided it is real play, free and spontaneous, initiated and directed by each child himself to meet his own needs—and is not teaching disguised as play—it is the only form of education that really educates in pre-school years. It is through play that the child strengthens and develops his growing body and establishes neuro-muscular co-ordination, control and skill. It is the means by which he develops his mind and teaches himself to think and reason, to compare and contrast, to

<sup>1</sup> Florence Goodenough: *Developmental Psychology*.

judge and draw conclusions, to plan and imagine and to use his mind in all ways necessary for intellectual development. Again it is through play that he establishes and maintains emotional balance, because of the outlet it gives for the expression of feelings and the release from strain it affords. Play indeed enables him to develop his character by the exercise of the self-control, self-reliance, patience and persistence that he brings to his pursuits. In short it affords education of the most complete kind for body, mind, character and personality.

To deny a child space or opportunity for free play in all the varied ways necessary to development ; to withhold from him toys and material that make play really satisfactory, is just as serious a deprivation to the growth of intelligence and character as lack of food and free activity are to the growing body. It causes psychic malnutrition, and renders the child ill-equipped for the adventure of life. Modern life which crowds people into cities has robbed children of all classes of their natural play, and new means must now be found for restoring it. Large houses and gardens are rapidly disappearing with the result that there is little place for the child to call his own in the modern house or flat, and none where he can play undisturbed and continue his play progressively for days at a time. He is constantly required to give up space to adult needs. Woods and meadows are available only to the country child, and trim parks even when accessible are a poor substitute. Streets are too dangerous to be the play-grounds they once were, while families, large enough to provide playmates of various ages, have practically disappeared. Natural material, too, is less accessible than it once was. Earth, sand, pebbles, seeds, shells are not easily available, nor is there room to-day to keep the odds and ends that once accumulated in lumber rooms and back-gardens and which led to such valuable play. To-day the child must

*Playing mothers*





*Interest stimulates concentration, co-ordination and control*





be content with the output of the commercial store, and many of the toys sold there have little permanent interest or real value. Finally he has to make do with toys that do not take up too much room, or that are not likely to prove too noisy for the adults in his small home.

"Our adult world owes children many apologies, but one it owes more than any other. The special apology for having intruded on their play."<sup>1</sup> In the report of the White House Conference, U.S.A., it is suggested that there should be a playground within a quarter of a mile of every home with a hundred square feet per child.

The campaign to provide playing fields for growing boys and girls has its counterpart here in the provision of nursery schools and classes for young children. The practice of bringing the "under fives" into Primary Schools and the provision for them of nursery classes should do much to improve the physique, intelligence and character, and enable them to benefit more fully from their subsequent schooling. But this will only happen if the essentials of childhood are included—ample space and opportunity for free movement, access to sun, light and air, good food, and opportunity for undisturbed free play with sensible and varied play material.

These classes will not provide a means of strengthening the child in body, mind and character if they merely serve to extend the length of traditional school life. Early schooling and training might easily become a new form of tyranny impoverishing and deforming growth. The child should be allowed to play freely and should not be prepared for school by "playful" lessons and thus initiated into school discipline and routine. When given opportunity to play in his own way, the child prepares himself for school and for life far more successfully than anyone else can prepare him. Though this period of life is definitely a preparation for the future—and the play

<sup>1</sup> Katherine Glover and Evelyn Dewar : *Children of the New Day*.

that nature stimulates at different stages assures this—play must be encouraged because of its value to the child at the moment. Childhood is not, and never has been fully appreciated for itself. It is protected and safeguarded, too often because it is a prelude to manhood and womanhood, and there are few who recognize the completeness and perfection of childhood itself. Christ saw it and proclaimed it and His words must have astonished the people of His day. Few teachers really accept His estimate or they would not be for ever trying to improve and alter what they see, but would leave the child free in his play, endeavouring themselves to become like him.

### EARLY STAGES

Fingers and toes are the first playthings, but the child soon begins to clutch at other objects and to hold them firmly in one hand or another. His choice is indiscriminate, as is also the use he makes of the things seized. He waves them in the air, hammers them on his cot, sucks them or throws them away, regardless whether the object seized be a spoon, a rattle, a watch or a tea-cup ! He is not in the least interested in the object. His interest is centred in his own activity, and anything that aids or augments it is of value to him. This early form of play is called by Karl Bühler "function play," and is in one sense the only real play an individual ever knows. It is performed for its own sake, without any aim or object beyond the enjoyments of the movement involved. When play is pursued to attain some goal, it ceases to be real play and becomes work. It is often said, and truly, that children work when they play and play when they work. This work attitude appears potentially even in infancy when the child becomes interested in the things he seizes. He examines them with care and even as young as ten months he begins to place them experi-

mentally this way and that. He notices what happens to them as a result of his activity and the different uses to which things can be put. When he learns to use both hands simultaneously and conjointly, this added power enables him to look at two things at the same time, and to compare the object in one hand with that in the other and to place objects in relationship. His doing so is an indication of intellectual development.

### VARIETY IN PLAY

During pre-school years the child's play is of three main types. (1) Active physical play by means of which the child co-ordinates and gains control of his body and its complicated mechanism; (2) play concerned with investigation, exploring and manipulation, that leads to mastery of material and creativity; (3) imaginative or dramatic play of the "Let's pretend" sort into which fantasy frequently enters. During these years children's play is sometimes sociable and shared with one or two others, sometimes it is solitary. Usually it alternates from one to the other. Though each type of play is specially helpful to one or other aspect of growth and provides outlet for physical, intellectual and emotional energy, the child lives and acts as a whole in all his play, and it is this fact that makes it so harmonizing an influence in the unevenness of growth. The personality reveals itself in physical form, in intellectual qualities, in emotional states, but never loses its unity. In active bodily play the child's mind is also active, planning and directing all he does. He remembers past experiences and uses them as a guide to present situations; he observes all that happens. He is alive intellectually and emotionally as well as physically. In fantasy or imaginative play, he moves about, lifting and carrying things, and uses his mind as well as his body in his make-believe. Imaginative play itself is constantly changing into intellectual

investigation because of the way in which it creates practical situations which are then pursued for their own sake. "In all play three elements are always present, the linking up with the world of human beings, the essential human mastery of material and outward expression of inward experience, but are so interwoven that analysis is well nigh impossible. Yet herein lies the whole meaning of play—and of life. We may endeavour to classify under social—functional and similar headings and produce statistical analysis, but life eludes statistics."<sup>1</sup>

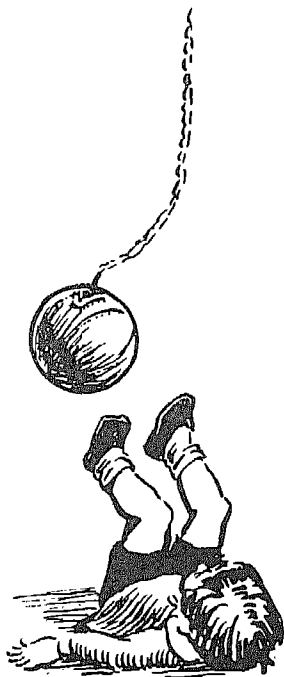
#### ACTIVE PLAY THAT INVOLVES THE USE OF THE BODY

Play involving bodily movement, though chiefly characteristic of the two to three-year-old persists throughout childhood. It is to a large extent "function play." The child is not pretending to do or be anything and he has no conscious goal or purpose. He runs, jumps, swings and tumbles about just for the fun of it. Though it is without conscious purpose it would, however, be erroneous to think of it as purposeless. No spontaneous activity is meaningless, but arises to take its fitting place in nature's scheme of development. In active play the child aids body growth, establishes neuro-muscular co-ordination and gains control of his movements. The more varied the activity is, the more rapid the growth and all healthy children find it much more difficult, and certainly more fatiguing to be still than to be active. A great deal of the play of a two-year-old is of this active nature, walking and running along paths, up and down steps, climbing and swinging wherever possible.

To acquire physical co-ordination and control the constant repetition of movements is essential, the lifting and carrying of things of all sizes, including objects which require effort to move. As the child becomes confident

<sup>1</sup> Marjorie Thorburn: *The Child at Play*. (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.)

of his power he grows more adventurous, and it is necessary for him to find toys and apparatus that encourage him to be progressive in his physical development. Provided with the right material and opportunity to use



Good Fun—and Good Exercise

it, the child will put himself through a comprehensive course of physical training as balanced and sound as any expert's plan could be. In free play with toys and apparatus that he enjoys, the child repeats movements over and over again gradually becoming more graceful and skilful, by eliminating any unnecessary movements

or expenditure of energy. There is a great opportunity in the Nursery School for training children in good posture and for checking any tendency towards bad posture. This is an aspect of preventive and remedial work that has not yet been fully explored. The time cannot be far distant when specialists will be attached to the school staff to initiate for individual cases activities involving hanging and swinging by the arms, balancing or whatever is necessary to improve posture or correct unsatisfactory tendencies. Some children by their own efforts and activity rectify many faults when they are given the freedom of a Nursery School, but there are those who need help and guidance.

Active play should take place out of doors whenever possible. In bad weather various kinds of indoor apparatus, such as climbing ropes, rings to hang and swing from, rope ladders, runabout toys and a movable Jungle Gym and stairway should also be available.

#### PLAY CONCERNED WITH INVESTIGATION AND EXPLORATION

As soon as the child is able to walk and is capable of independent movement he begins to explore his world and experiment with things, investigating their nature and discovering what can be done with them. It is a type of play that persists throughout childhood and characterizes the child's approach to every kind of new material. In its earliest stage, it is stimulated by the suggestiveness of the things that the child sees and handles, and his play is in the nature of reaction and adjustment to external stimuli. Experimental play has neither beginning nor end. The child does not persist in it for any length of time, and as he has little desire to pursue any plan or try to make anything specific, he does not seriously mind interruption. As with experience his interests widen and knowledge and skill increase he begins to be interested in the things he plays with and the

various uses to which they can be put. Intellectual curiosity is aroused and also the desire to satisfy it. From tentative beginnings the child advances to thoughtful investigation and plays in a way that suggests that he is continually asking why? how? if? and answering his own questions and arguing things out in a way that becomes steadily more logical. It is, in fact, the beginning of research. Helped by suggestive material, the child can make good intellectual progress and set forth on a quest for discovery.

The four-year-old who does a great deal of practical reasoning in his play, needs many kinds of adaptable material with which he can experiment and use in a variety of ways. The material should stimulate the use and exercise of sense perceptions and give opportunity for comparing and discriminating between extremes that are in great contrast and those in which the differences are slight. The toys should provide for manipulation in ways that involve judgment and decisions. Such play provides the concrete basis from which abstract reasoning and judgment can arise at a later age.

### PLAY BECOMES WORK

When as a result of much experimentation the child is thoroughly conversant with varied material and has acquired mastery over it, he begins to use it with intelligent purpose. He thinks, plans and determines before he begins to play what he is going to do. Once this stage is reached the stimulus no longer arises from the suggestiveness of the material but from the child's own intelligence. It is his own ideas and desires and not external stimuli that prompt both his choice of material and the use to which he puts it. This thoughtful experimental play involves the use of past experience, memory, attention, concentration, imagination, and the ability to follow and work out an abstract idea. It is a much more

complex performance than the simple and almost impulsive reaction to outward stimulus with which this type of play begins. It is purposeful from the beginning to the end. The following illustration, given by Charlotte Bühler, serves to show the different way in which a child of three and a half and one of seven will use the same material. Both children found some clothes pegs and began to play with them. The three-year-old put them in a box which he fastened to a waggon, and went about selling them as bread rolls. The seven-year-old, after experimenting with them and the way in which they could be manipulated, began fitting them together, and made an aeroplane, saw-horse and a motor-car. "The seven-year-old differs from the three-year-old child in two ways. (1) He tries to make something with his material; the younger child does not. (2) He tries to discover through his activity the best use for the material, that is, its appropriate use. He uses it specifically. The young child is unspecific, he uses the pegs for a purpose for which they are as ill or well suited as anything else. He has not developed either the power to construct or to treat his material as having specific qualities."<sup>1</sup>

When the child begins to work to a plan and endeavours to make real things, his play should not be interrupted but he should be given the opportunity always to complete what he is doing. He resents interruptions at this stage as much as adults do when engaged in serious work. It is in play of this nature that persistence of effort, concentration and attention are all developed and the child thus prepares himself for real work. When he has learned habitually to follow a plan with perseverance and self-forgetfulness, he attains what Charlotte Bühler calls "school maturity"—that is the ability to undertake and carry through tasks and duties impersonally. If the

<sup>1</sup> C. Bühler: *The Child and his Activity with Practical Material*. British Journal of Educational Psychology, February 1933.



child is constantly interrupted in his play and has only short intervals for it, he does not form the habit of concentration or attention, and remains infantile in this aspect of growth. When this happens the ex-nursery school child is a problem on entering the "big" school, for he is unable to tackle school work or to carry on without constant adult stimulation.

The child approaches each type of material with a two-fold interest. He wants to discover all the possibilities of it, and also his own skill in using it. Until he has achieved both he is not able to use the material as a means of expressing himself and his ideas. The child's progress in this way is clearly shown in his painting. At first he is content merely to daub the paint over the paper. It is a way of exploring the "paintness" of paint and of gaining control of the use of the brush. It is purely experimental. Next he begins to play with his own skill, making lines, circles, etc. and when by chance these strokes resemble something, or a teacher asks a tactful question, he decides that he has made a picture of this, or that and gives the name to his creation *after* it is finished. "Look! look what I've done—its my dad," he exclaims excitedly. A little later he begins to name things *as he makes them*. "I am making the sun, this is the sea," or "now I am doing a boat," and in doing so is still to a large extent inspired by the suggestiveness of his achievement. Eventually, he acquires sufficient control of the material to use it as a means of saying something definite and announces *before* commencing his work what he is going to do. "I am going to paint an aeroplane flying over the sea. I want some silver paint, etc."

"The child passes from primitive pleasure in activity to pleasure in creation and production, an essentially human pleasure. Instead of pouring out energy in activity, we transfer it to material, and find pleasure in

stamping our individuality on material. We express ourselves through it. With this are connected three important experiences characteristic of mankind. While active with material man surrenders himself to it, masters it and puts something new into the world."<sup>1</sup>

A social element enters into play when the child begins to master his materials and to make recognizable objects. It enables others to enter into his play and his thoughts. This was illustrated when a child who had been scribbling with chalks suddenly exclaimed, "I've drawn a man." He was so very excited, though it consisted of only a head, that he took it around for every child in the room to see. Many of them showed great interest in it and laughingly pointed out eyes and nose. On returning to his table he said, "And now I am going to draw a *very* funny man." He did so and on taking that round to be looked at, there was much laughter. Children often join together in play when a definite plan is being worked out, co-operating in a way that is not possible until their interests are objective.

In the article referred to above, Dr. Bühler quotes some interesting tests that were made in America on two groups of children of similar age. One group consisted of institutional children who had little opportunity for collecting things or playing with more than a few conventional toys. The other group was composed of children of poor parents, who played in the streets, and backyards of shops where a great variety of odds and ends of waste material had collected. When these children were tested by the Bühler Development Tests, the intelligence of the children of the poor families was found to be very much greater than that of those in institutions. The difference was even greater in ability to handle different materials. If the child has a variety of material and long

<sup>1</sup> C. Bühler: *The Child and His Activity with Practical Material*, British Journal of Educational Psychology, February 1933.

periods of undisturbed play with it, not only will his general intelligence be stimulated but he will gain knowledge and appreciation of different media and manipulative skill. These are of considerable value when at about eight or nine the creative impulse arises vigorously. This impulse, supported by previously acquired skill, knowledge and keen perception, will enable the child to produce creative work on a far higher level than is possible to those whose play life has been short and play materials scanty.

### MAKING THINGS

The desire to make things is strong in the child, and construction is a very general type of play. Possibly bricks satisfy this desire more than any other single material, and it is with bricks that he first begins purposeful play. He makes towers, trains and fences at two or younger. Bricks can be used for many different purposes and are equally satisfying to the two and five-year-olds, used either alone, or in combination with other toys. In carrying them about, in constructing simple towers or complicated buildings the child acquires a great deal of sensorial knowledge, e.g., of weight, size, perspective balance and cohesion. Manipulative toys and material, objects that require to be matched, sorted and classified, are of value and help the child to gain manual dexterity, to master his material world, to grow aware of its possibilities and to discover something about the operation of natural law.

When the child becomes interested in making real things, he requires the use of tools and material with which actual objects can be constructed. Hammers and nails, wood and varnish are necessary as well as some training in the technique of handling them.

Because four-year-old children are so independent and grown up, as compared with the two-year-olds,

teachers do not always realize that they are in need of help and direction in their play, and proportionately less is done for them than for the two-year-olds. Where the teacher spends time playing with the four-year-olds and helping them to discover new and more difficult ways of handling all kinds of materials, their play interests are intensified. They begin to model with clay effectively, to make all kinds of complicated machines with their pic-a-bric, and elaborate buildings with their bricks, occasionally calling upon the adult to help them to get things right.

Children require material that becomes progressively more difficult to handle and wider in possibility—things that challenge increasing skill and knowledge. At four years old, though they continue to use many of the same toys as younger children they use them in a different way, and require, in addition to simple bricks, for instance, those of more varied sizes and shapes with which they can make more exact representations of actual objects. The addition of arches and curves, cylindrical shaped bricks, half bricks and triangular ones enrich the possibility of brick play. Unless supplied with plenty of good material, four and five-year-olds become restless and rebellious. The “seniors” of the nursery school should show by their perseverance and absorption in play as well as by the quality of it, the good they have gained from two years already spent in the nursery. Sometimes, however, they are the most difficult group of all. They do not settle happily to play, and are lacking in responsibility, are unresponsive and quarrelsome. Such behaviour is frequently a symptom of psychic malnourishment. Often it is the play life that is not being satisfied either because of inadequate time for play or paucity of play material. Too often toys provided for these big children do not necessitate enough mental or physical effort and are suitable only for fantasy-play—

dolls, teddy bears, toy tools, etc. Those who are adaptable, placid and not very intelligent make the best of such toys, prolong the stage of fantasy-play and live more and more in an unreal world which becomes a way of escape and a compensation for what they miss. The more lively ones become destructive and undisciplined. They need to have real things to do, and real tools to do them with. If they are constantly frustrated by inappropriate material or poor tools, this serves to increase their rebellious tendency.

### IMAGINATIVE AND FANTASY PLAY

The emotional life of a young child is intense. He is very easily provoked and impulses often rise suddenly and overwhelmingly. He cannot deny them or keep them bottled up. They burst forth as either anti-social behaviour, demonstrations of great affection, in temper tantrums, or are expressed in play. Play is, in fact, the great safety valve, and in it the child can give free expression to tenderness or hostility—to love or to hate. Doll play, pretending to be “mummies” and “daddies”—both those who are tender and those who beat their children—playing house, hiding in cupboards—such play is characteristic of nursery years and reaches its height at about three and a half to four.

Imaginative play is very varied. The child sometimes plays about things that interest or puzzle him. “I will be all these things in order to understand them,” is his unconscious thought. He will meow like a kitten and want his milk in a saucer or he strides about shouting “Bottles and Iron” or races along like an engine or motor-car. Also he plays at impersonating people.

This imitation of people and things and the dramatizing of past experiences is a kind of remembrance in action. Experiences that have impressed him will be the subject of games, such as a visit to the country, a ride in a train or

bathing a new baby, just as with older people these are the things of which they talk. These games are really a living experience to the child and not dead or slavish imitations. As an artist in painting a landscape does more than reproduce the objects present to sight or memory, so the child—who is himself an artist in the way he uses play as media for self-expression. When he is playing about past experiences, he invests the incidents with the meaning they have for him, and expresses his wonder, perplexity, or enjoyment, his fear, anxiety or anger. This living over again of past experiences gives relief to any emotional excitement that the incidents may have aroused and is one of the ways in which the child builds his experience into himself. "A child went forth and the object that he looked upon became part of him for the day, or a certain part of the day, or for many years, or stretching cycles of years."<sup>1</sup>

Imitative play, in which the child assumes different roles, reveals the close correspondence that exists between inner and outer stimulus. Though the environment remains the same, the things chosen to be played about change as the child grows, and vary from child to child. "The outer factors of the environment may be responsible for the material of play—the things a child imitates. But it is the inner factor of play-instinct that alone determines when and how imitation is to take place, for the unconscious choice made of the models, as well as the way they are grasped and worked up, entirely depends on the natural disposition and the inner influence of development and differentiation."<sup>2</sup> At one time the play will be about mummies and babies—at another it will be motor cars or the postman, for with growth interests widen, and environment is extended. Sex too, influences the choice, a brother and sister of the same age will play about different things in the same environment, the girl

<sup>1</sup> Walt Whitman: *Assimilation*.

<sup>2</sup> Stern: *Op. cit.*

probably choosing doll-play and the boy play with engines or motor cars.

In impersonating people whom he loves and admires the child, by identifying himself with such people, tends to absorb them and their characteristics into himself. Hadfield speaks of the nursery years as the time when ideals are formed, and says that the ideals that a child acquires at this age, stimulated by the character and conduct of people surrounding him, have a marked effect on the development of his character. Thus it is important that adults who surround the child, and are closely connected with him, and who, because of this intimacy, provide the subject-matter of much of his play, should be careful to give him ideals worth copying, and provide him with situations that are helpful and strengthening to inspire his play.

Much play is of the wish variety. The child, conscious of his smallness and lack of strength, plays at being a big, strong man, doing great deeds. Such play gives outlet for feeling of annoyance or revenge, and is a kind of protest against a sense of inferiority and helplessness in the presence of unmanageable objects or dominating adults. Scolding a doll, beating a teddy bear, whipping a hobby-horse, stamping on toys, is an outlet for emotional tension and makes it "easier for a child to control real behaviour and to accept the limitations of the real world."<sup>1</sup> Teachers must learn to distinguish between the rough and careless use of toys which occurs because the child is lacking in co-ordination or a sense of order, and fantasy-play in which the toy is used symbolically. Carelessness and rough usage call for training in the protection of possessions, but when the toy is used symbolically the child must be left free to give an outlet to his feelings. Such play has a therapeutical

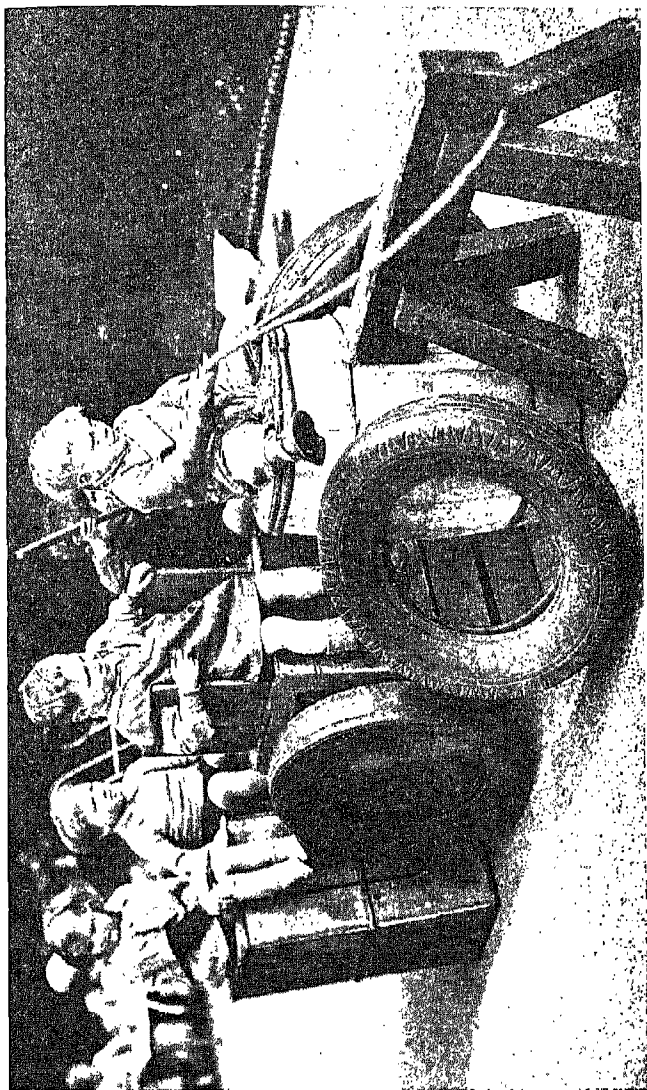
<sup>1</sup> Susan Isaacs: *Intellectual Development in Young Children*. (George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.)

value, and if it is prevented bad social conduct or emotional problems may in consequence develop.

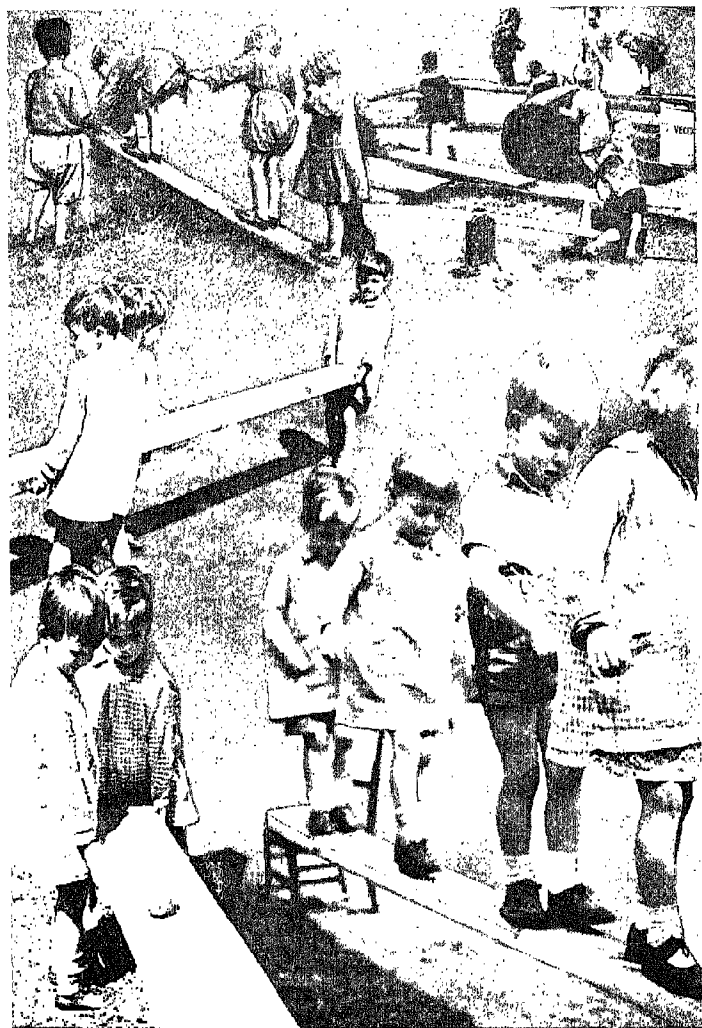
Sometimes the child plays about things of which he is afraid, big dogs, sudden noises, angry adults, etc. There are many things that cause fear to which the child cannot give expression in words which is the adult way of dispelling fears. Play is the child's language, and he plays out these fears and anxieties and so overcomes them. Independence, for which the child fights so valiantly, brings with it consciousness of self and conscience and feelings of guilt soon appear. It often happens that when a child chastises her dolls she is playing that she is her own mother punishing her. It is indicative of anxiety. The child sets himself standards that are frequently beyond his powers of attainment and punishes himself by "taking it out of" his toys. The influence of the unconscious on play revealed by such conduct cannot be dealt with at length in a general analysis. That is, moreover, more the concern of the psychologist than of the young teacher.

Children become completely absorbed in imaginative and imitative play and for the time being they *are* the people they play about. A long skirt or a piece of material twisted about them, a shawl, or even such simple "properties" as a handbag or shopping basket are eagerly seized upon to convert Sheila into Sheila's mother. Voice, facial expression, physical actions are all adopted in exact imitation of the adult. Houses are constructed with chairs, tables, screens or anything handy, complete with imaginary doors and windows. Chairs are turned into motor cars; a chalk line is declared to be a fireplace. Yet absorbed as the child becomes and realistically as he behaves, he never for a moment believes that the chair on which he sits is actually a motor car, or that Tommy has really turned into the milkman. It is all pretence. "Fantasy may lead him to create





*Waste material leads to inventiveness*



*A plank as a plaything*

make-believe situations, but he continues to feel reality limiting him in that situation, just as we do. Even when he gives himself up to complete realization, he knows that it is make belief."<sup>1</sup>

Games of pretence, invented by teachers are very different in their effect and may easily be a source of confusion to the child. When he himself invents his play the imaginative situations and fantasies are expressions of himself and, as such, have meaning to him that an adult trying to feel like a child can never realize. When a teacher joins in play of this sort, she should let the child be the leader and should endeavour to carry out his ideas.

The line that divides the imaginative from the experimental is a thin one and these two types of play constantly run into and replace one another. A child, building a garage and trying to make it as much like a real one as he can, will suddenly abandon the task, in order to dash about the room like an imaginary motor car, and back in and out of his newly constructed garage. Conversely a child absorbed in imaginative play with a milk float, calling "Milk! Milk!" and selling it to imaginary customers, will forget it in a new-born interest in the wheels of his float. He will examine them to discover how they work, and fetch other wheeled toys for comparison. Imaginative and fantasy play continually give rise to situations that are "then pursued for their own sake and thus lead to actual discovery or verbal judgment and reasoning."<sup>2</sup>

If the play experiences at two and three years of age are fully satisfying, emotional and intellectual development proceed normally, provided of course the child is cared for sensibly. By five years of age, or thereabouts, fantasy-play decreases as the child's interests are turned in

<sup>1</sup> Susan Isaacs : *Intellectual Development in Young Children*.

<sup>2</sup> Susan Isaacs : *Op. cit.*

the direction of doing and making real things. "In later development, direct expression of fantasy becomes more closely limited to imaginative art and literature, yet it leaves a permanent representative behind in the realm of thought itself, in the shape of disciplined imagination of "as ifs" and of scientific hypotheses."<sup>1</sup>

It has already been shown that children's play-activities follow a definite sequence for "it is a law of nature, a law of mental growth that one performance should precede another at certain steps of maturity."<sup>2</sup> Thus the teacher who systematically observes the trend of each child's play should know whether or not he is developing satisfactorily. A form in which she can keep a record of the most essential features of the child's play and of his behaviour generally is given in the Appendix.

If a child is found not to be progressing, one of the best ways to help is for the teacher to put him in touch with play-material likely to quicken the backward impulses or to stimulate greater efforts. In guidance clinics children are healed and re-educated through play. The right toys—right in relation to the child's stage of growth and individual need—provide the best means for education and re-education.

<sup>1</sup> Susan Isaacs : *Op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Gesell : *Guidance and Mental Growth in Infancy and Childhood.*

## CHAPTER XI

### PLAY MATERIAL

"If we were more primitive, we could perhaps give less thought to the provision of play material, but in becoming to some extent civilized we have unwittingly allowed ourselves to be deprived of elementary play material, not realizing its significance. We have provided faulty substitutes for it."<sup>1</sup> Sand is a never failing source of interest especially to the two and three-year-olds and many things can be done with it and learnt from it. Sand pits should be deep enough to permit real digging and in close proximity there should be shelves or cupboards full of buckets and spades, pots and pans, containers of various sizes and shapes in which sand can be put or moulded. These should all be of a non-rusting material, unbreakable and free from sharp edges. Filling and emptying is the chief interest of the two-year-old and he should have many sizes of pots with which to make his "pies." Children of four and five want to do more with the sand and like to use sieves, scoops, funnels, measure-pots, weights and scales. It is preferable for these tools to be used at a sand table, though if the sand pit has a wide shelf surrounding it, which can be used as a table, this serves equally well. Water should be available for wet sand is very suitable for moulding. All children want to play with water, "who is very serviceable unto us and humble and precious and clean."<sup>2</sup> Its appeal is irresistible at all ages, and play with it is deeply satisfying to a child both intellectually and emotionally. Paddling

<sup>1</sup> Gwen Chester: *The Child's Needs and His Play in The Growing Child and His Problems*. (King and Page.)

<sup>2</sup> St. Francis.

pools and fountains are a never-ending source of delight, but much satisfaction can be provided with zinc-lined water tables or even an old bath if, in addition to the water, there are funnels, scoops, tubes for syphoning, cups, measure-pots, bottles and jars of all sizes as well as floating toys.

Children should be given opportunity to make a mess with water, or water and sand. The impulse to do so is strong, and has to be restricted in most homes where order is necessary. In addition to "messaging about" with water, children can also use it for games of skill, filling narrow-necked bottles through funnels from jugs, ladles and other objects. This kind of activity can gradually become a skilful operation if arranged in a way that makes the child aware of uncontrolled action. The water can be coloured—and a white American cloth cover be put on the table, with mop handy to wipe up every drop spilled. Children in one school learned to ladle soup and pour milk admirably as a result of practice in ladling and pouring coloured water set out as a game of skill on a specially prepared daintily arranged table.

Toys and play material should be attractive to look at and to handle. The very young child is not self-directing in his activities, but is stimulated by the suggestiveness of the things surrounding him. Objects that are attractively coloured, pleasant to hold and to touch, are more encouraging to play with than ugly, shabby and broken toys, unpleasing both to see and to use. This is not true of personal possessions and a toy that has grown old and shabby through much use is still loved by the child, who remembers it as he once saw it and who surrounds it with feelings and association. But nursery school toys are not personal possessions, and children will never take care of them and enjoy playing with them unless they are attractive in appearance and pleasant to the touch.

Tactual sensitiveness is the first of the senses to develop and is very highly evolved even at birth. The fingers of the nursery school child are particularly sensitive and rich experience can come to him through his hands. With growth the skin thickens and a great deal of the sensitiveness has already disappeared by the age of seven. It is moreover easier to train children to take care of their toys if the toys are clean and unbroken; they delight in pretty things and desire to preserve them. Worn, broken or soiled toys do not inspire care and give rise to rough, neglectful usage.

Nursery school toys should be durable; fragile, easily broken toys are unsuitable except for special occasions, such as birthday parties. Wooden toys are more suitable than those made of metal, and should of course be free from splinters.

Low cupboards are better than shelves for storing toys as they get less dusty, and the child is provided with useful experience in the opening and closing of doors. Sliding doors which take up no space are practical in a small room. Shelves that can be adjusted in height to take large or small toys are practical. The cupboards should not be deep, but should have narrow shelves on which it is possible for all toys to be seen and reached. Where shelves are deep, some toys always get pushed to the back out of reach, and as the young child tends to take the first thing he sees, he does not exercise choice unless they are so arranged that he sees many things at once. Where toys are well set out children can often be seen wandering past the shelves, looking at this and touching that before making a choice, as adults do in choosing a book from a library. The motive that prompts them both is the same.

For the two-year-old, who does not spend much time in selection, each shelf of the cupboard should contain a choice of toys. The same selection can be repeated in

many places, and as these young children do not need a great variety, this arrangement is simple and easy. It also simplifies the replacing of toys after use which every child should be trained to do from the beginning. For older children who choose with more discrimination, and are capable of remembering where things are kept, it is an advantage to have toys classified, such as cupboards for dolls, and others for fitting-in toys, or for plastic material, etc. This orderly arrangement is good training for the child, and the interior of cupboards can be adapted accordingly. Bricks are difficult to house. For the youngest children who do not need many at a time, they can be stored in trucks and carts, which also provide a simple means of moving them from place to place, or kept in strong linen bags with a thick cord running through curtain rings at the top. They can then be hung on hooks. These bags can be easily carried about, and make putting-away time fairly simple. For older children who need many bricks for their play, larger carts can be used as a store, or one cupboard can be used or a corner of the room reserved for brick play.

Special display tables, or open shelves are of value for setting out something different each week. Many toys are overlooked or forgotten and much useful material remains unexplored, unless brought to the children's notice at intervals and this special display often succeeds in awakening fresh interests and stimulating new kinds of play. A birthday cupboard in which very special toys are kept has been found attractive, for children dearly love a treat. In this, all kinds of toys beloved by children but of a special character, such as dolls with silk dresses, super-prams, tea-sets, etc., can be stored, and the birthday child be permitted to choose a special toy for the day. A great deal of fun is provided by mechanical toys which are often amusing though valueless for daily play. They have little or no educational value, but serve as an



occasional entertainment and provoke much laughter at a birthday party.

### PLAY MATERIAL FOR DIFFERENT AGES

In no case are the lists below complete. The material listed is suggestive of types of suitable toys and play-things. It is inadvisable to have too much material (i.e. too many kinds) available at the same time—and better to ring the changes occasionally. There should be a large number of popular toys as this prevents jealousy and disputes.

#### TWO-YEAR-OLDS

1. Climbing frames with rungs small enough in circumference to be firmly clutched, and sufficiently widely spaced to permit climbing in and out.

Small slides with steps, either leading up to the slides or up to a platform from which the children can jump.

Steps can also be made of three or four square, hollow boxes, each smaller than the other and placed on top of one another. They should be firmly fastened together; this makes a raised platform which children can run up and down, and from which they can jump.

Planks, at least nine inches wide, placed two or three inches from the ground, for balancing and jumping.

See-saws; large balls; runabout and pull-along toys; animals on wheels; wagons and trucks; boxes with or without wheels but with ropes attached in which objects can be pulled about; push-about toys, such as prams, carts etc.

Low and very safe swings can be used indoors as well as out if suitable hooks are provided in doorways. Another useful toy for doorways is a suspended ball which children can kick while lying on their backs. This is a very strengthening exercise for frail legs and backs.

Toys for riding that take the weight from the legs that are not yet very strong, i.e., hobby-horses on wheels on

which the child can sit and push himself along with his feet on the ground. Simple pedal-cars.

2. Tins, cartons, and every kind of box that opens and shuts into which small objects can be placed. Glass containers that chip and break are unsuitable. Wooden boxes should be made safe from splinters. Tins should be rustless and have no sharp edges or corners. There should be small objects for filling the containers, i.e., beech-nuts, shells, conkers, lentils, beans, peas, etc.

3. Fitting-in toys, e.g., Montessori cylindrical insets, simple form-boards, peg-board, nests of boxes, baskets or dolls that fit inside one another. Objects with holes in which children can poke fingers and sticks, e.g., pyramid mosaics, pegs and shapes, large wooden beads of divers shapes to be threaded on boot-laces with tags or cords with waxed ends that neither invite nor necessitate sucking.

4. Bricks in small quantities. The two-year-old does not build very much except towers and fences. Bricks are chiefly used for physical exercise, being carried or trundled from place to place, and for fantasy-play. They should be large enough to require hand and not finger manipulation, i.e., about two or three-inch cubes, or if brick-shaped  $3 \times 2 \times \frac{1}{2}$  inches approximately. Wooden trains, of which parts can be linked together on tongue and groove principle and without wheels.

5. Dolls of the simplest kind, more suggestive than detailed. They should be big enough to be nursed comfortably; washable rubber dolls are specially suitable. They should be dressed in one or two simple garments, that come off and on easily and are without fastenings. Dolls' prams and beds with plenty of covers.

6. Sand for digging, buckets, spades, scoops and receptacles in which sand can be moulded and pies made, and different kinds of receptacles that can be filled and emptied.

7. Picture-books made of firm material. The pictures should be very simple and deal with familiar things—domestic animals, children, motor cars, aeroplanes, men and women and situations within the child's experience.

Picture cards mounted on cardboard, glazed and kept in boxes are enjoyed, and are inexpensive to provide.

### THREE TO FIVE

1. Higher and steeper slides approached by flights of steps; climbing frames on which children can become adventurous. This frame should be so constructed as to include a section from which children can hang by the hands and swing. If, in addition there is a railed-in platform up to which children can climb, this stimulates a great deal of play on the platform to which various toys are carried, and also underneath, as it makes an excellent "home" or "getting into" place. Large packing cases sandpapered to avoid splinters for lifting and pulling about and turning into play-houses. Barrels and logs for rolling about; these stimulate playing together in order to carry them from place to place. Punchball, knotted ropes for climbing, suspended ropes ending with metal rings from which children can swing by the hands, or in crossbars of wood on which they can sit and stand to swing. Rope ladders, and trapeze. Platform for jumping from. Balancing planks with supports of different heights, ranging from six inches to a foot, which children can adjust. The planks can range from two to six inches wide. This material often leads to useful experiment with inclined planes, improvised see-saws, jauncing board.

2. Runabout toys, e.g., wagons, trolleys, wheelbarrows. These should be big and strong enough to carry objects and give rides to other children; they encourage social play. Tricycles, motor-cars and other propelled vehicles. Skittles, quoits, target games, bats, balls, racquets, hoops, skipping ropes, reins.

3. Fitting-in toys, and threading toys, as provided for two-year-olds, but of a more advanced kind. Montessori geometric insets and other form-boards, peg-boards, beads of various sizes, both wooden and china. Jigsaw puzzles are popular provided the pieces are not too small or too indefinite in shape to permit the child to succeed in fitting them in. In working with them he seems to

examine shape rather than try to build the picture. When buying jigsaws the teacher should therefore give more consideration to the shape of the pieces than to the picture.

4. Bricks of varied shapes and sizes and in greater quantities than are required for the younger children. After many experiments the general opinion is that the most useful bricks measure  $6 \times 3 \times 1$  inches with variation in length, i.e.,  $3 \times 3 \times 1$ ,  $12 \times 3 \times 1$ ,  $18 \times 3 \times 1$  and possibly a few  $24 \times 2 \times 1$ . The largest number should be the first and second mentioned. A few cylinders, arches and triangular blocks increase possibilities and these should be to scale; cylinders  $6 \times 3$ , arches  $12 \times 3$ , and triangles  $6 \times 3$ . 150 pieces all told are a reasonable quantity. They can be made by any useful carpenter from non-splintering hard whitewood. Large hollow blocks with hand hole for lifting are suitable for out-of-door building. They should be of material seasoned for all weather so as to be useful for keeping out of doors. Many teachers regard these as undesirable as they are so light that they are apt to give a false conception of weight in relation to bulk.

5. Toys that do things such as cranes, dredgers, wind-mills, are very valuable; also trains that link together, and constructional material such as pic-a-bric and matador. Laughter-producing toys like "Crazy-Ike."

6. Sand-play tables, as well as sand-pits, scoops, funnels, sieves, weights, scales, measure-pots of varied capacity, paper bags, etc. Water-play zinc-lined tables are obtainable, but a common bath or anything that holds water will suffice; measure-pots, ladles, spoons, funnels, rubber tubing. There should be a collection of things of various densities—things that float well out of water, things that float mostly submerged, things that sink slowly and others that sink quickly. Ice if obtainable is interesting.

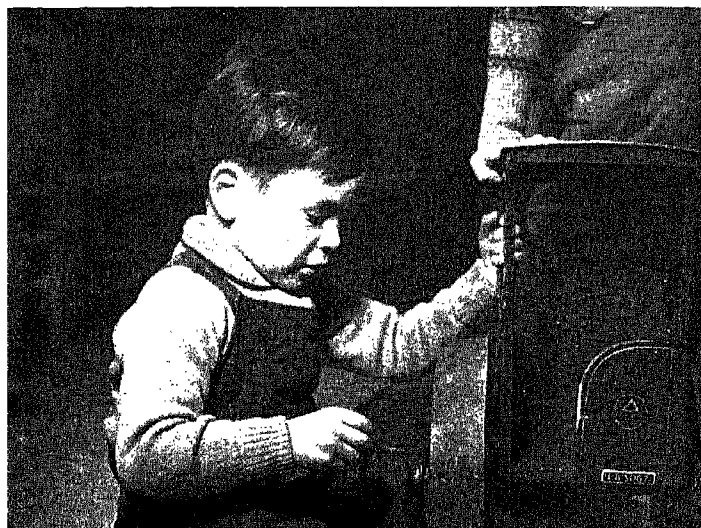
7. Material that stimulates the use of the senses and by exercise develops a fine sensory discrimination, in regard to colour, form, size, texture, weight, sound, touch, etc. Montessori sense-material is suitable.

8. Pattern and picture-making material. Mosaics of all kinds, shapes for tracing and colouring with crayons,



*Waterplay : a medium for fantasy and experiment*

*Real tools make  
fingers skilful*



either Montessori metal insets, which are suggestive for designing or similar objects, paper, crayon, paints, brushes.

9. Plastic material. Clay, plasticine, putty, dough, sand used with water.

10. Dolls. Boy and girl dolls including washable baby dolls, all of them more realistic than those required for the two-year-old. All accessories that make for doll-play, baths, prams, tea-sets, beds and bedding, feeding bottles. Dolls' clothes in sets with simple fastenings. Good sense training can be provided by having the sets of different colours. Chests or boxes for storing clothes. Cardboard-filing chests are useful.

11. Playhouses, either permanent or easily erected out of adjustable screens. All the paraphernalia that makes for "living" in these houses, i.e., furniture, kitchen utensils, tubs, mangles, irons, clothes line, pegs, clothes horses, brooms, pans and dusters. Shops or the means of constructing and equipping them, with goods for sale, i.e., clay fruit and vegetables, boxes, tins, cartons, bottles. Scales, telephones, cardboard pennies, paper bags, notices, price cards, etc.

12. Dressing up material. Garments, lengths of stuff, lace, silk, georgette, ribbons, hats, umbrellas, gloves, handbags, shopping baskets, also uniforms for policemen, postmen, conductors. These should be stored suitably in an accessible place.

13. Picture books, which can be housed on a book-shelf and kept as attractive as all books should be. These should be more advanced than those provided for two-year-olds and include pictures of well-known stories and rhymes. It is an advantage if a special corner can be reserved for "the library" with a cloth upon the table, or a table of a special colour to encourage children to handle and use books properly. A book trolley makes a good portable library. Picture cards, mounted on cardboard and glazed, kept about a dozen in a box, suitably chosen post-cards similarly stored. These can also be kept in "the library."

14. Waste material, which can be used either alone or

combined with other toys has been already mentioned. This material because of its miscellaneous nature is difficult to house, but good use can be made of orange boxes, in the sections of which the material can be more or less classified. Wood ; odd pieces and circles that can be used as wheels, such as Gloy-tops, cotton-reels ; meat skewers, orange sticks, used matches. String, lengths of wool, bodkins,



A Book Trolley

coarse canvas, tape, rubber bands, paper fasteners, adhesive tape. Boxes of all shapes and sizes, from pill-boxes to shoe and hat boxes. Cardboard, pliable and stiff, cylindrical rolls and miscellaneous material, such as ribbon bolts ; catalogues, fashion books, wallpaper books, scissors, pencils, paper of various kinds, i.e., wrapping paper, unprinted newspaper, crepe tissue in all colours, corrugated, transparent cellophane.

The advantage of an outdoor rubbish heap will be dealt with in the chapter on gardens.

15. Bubble-pipes. These should for preference be an



individual possession kept in a child's locker or drawer. Otherwise they must be treated with a strong disinfectant after use.

### FINGER PAINT

Specialized material such as finger paint gives children great delight by enabling them to make a splendid mess and to dabble fingers and hands in it. Finger painting is a good beginning to a form of creative activity of considerable importance in early years—the making of patterns and the painting of pictures. Finger paint is a soft creamy substance that spreads easily and smoothly over sheets of paper or American cloth that have been previously dampened with a sponge. It is easily removed from clothes and is non-poisonous, both useful qualities as children get much paint on their garments and messy fingers have a tendency to go into mouths. The paint can be obtained in many colours and provides excellent colour training in the mixing and blending that children delight to do.

The texture of the paint when spread lends itself to the gliding movement of hands and fingers, and as the child draws his patterns and his pictures with his fingers he gets an agreeable feel of the form of the shapes he makes. With this, as with all new material, the child's first reaction is one of experimentation. He spreads the paint about, gliding his fingers this way and that. Soon, however, as patterns or pictures are suggested by the shape of his movement he finds that by a twist of the fingers or by a continuous hard and moving pressure of the thumb, he can create forms. He begins to do so with purpose. The effect is so stimulating that he soon desires brushes and paper by means of which permanent and real pictures can be produced.

### POWDER PAINT

Large sheets of kitchen paper or any cheap paper such

as unprinted newspaper should be fastened to boards, easels or any upright surface at a height comfortable for a child to work at. Powder paints are cheap and suitable and can be obtained in good colours. These should be mixed with a fixing medium, and made ready for use. Long-handled brushes should be provided and the child shown how to hold them. At first children put so much paint on the paper that it trickles down, so unless easels with paint pot shelves are available it is necessary to cover the floor.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE TEACHER'S PART

preceding chapters suggestions have the way in which the teacher can co-ordinating child, helping him to adjust himself, and to acquire habitual responses on different occasions and at the same time himself. Nevertheless a separate chapter is necessary as there are many matters that are too general and too important to be put in any other chapter.

The school teacher has a role to fill that is in contrast to that of teachers of older children. She needs to be mother, nurse, teacher and friend. It is a task for which few, if any, are fitted by nature alone. Love of children, sympathy, and for managing them and the practical common sense which so many young women possess, are necessary; resourcefulness, a sense of humour, and a friendliness that facilitates social contacts are also needed, though excellent and essential in themselves. She must be aware of the changing of social conditions and the many problems that exist to ameliorate them, especially those that affect children. She should study physical conditions that hamper, even if they do not hinder. It is as necessary for her to be able to recognize symptoms of ill health as to be able to deal with behaviour problems. It is the same with adults who have "the equivalent

examine the roots. However delicate his specimen may be, his cloistered wizardry will succeed in bringing it into flower."<sup>1</sup> Though such teachers exist they are very rare. The "born" teacher requires also special training if the educational possibilities of the nursery school are to be fully realized. She needs an acquired technique if her love is to be made fruitful in service.

"There is only one road to progress in education as in other human affairs : science, wielded by love. Without science love is powerless, without love science is destructive. All that has been done to improve the education of little children has been done by those who love them . . . and those who know all that science could teach on the subject."<sup>2</sup> In this statement Bertrand Russell brings together the two essential qualities of the nursery school teacher—knowledge of the laws of growth and the way to collaborate with them, added to wisdom and spiritual understanding born of love.

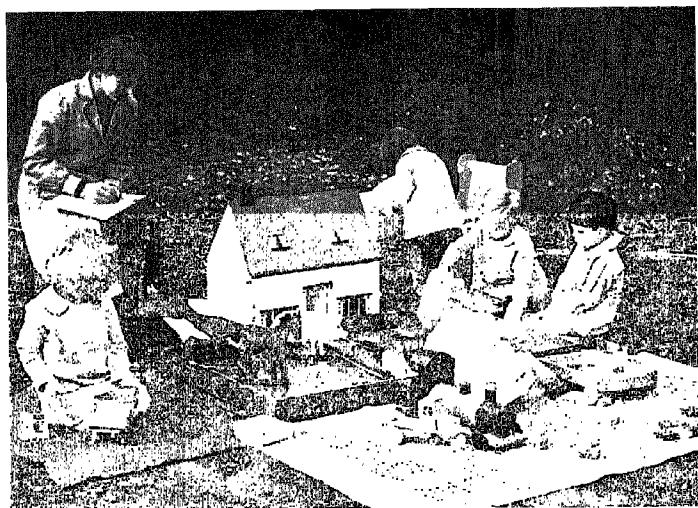
### THE VALUE OF OBSERVATION

Knowledge of children can be acquired through study of researches made by other workers in the field and by first-hand observation. Both these approaches are essential and should supplement each other. "He who earnestly desires to gain deep understanding of the greatest drama of evolution—the growing to human estate of our children, must be prepared to realize that this is impossible without very thorough preparation."<sup>3</sup> Of first importance is the cultivation of a scientific attitude and approach that disregards prejudice, accepted beliefs and opinions in an endeavour to see the child as he really is. Reference is so often made to the "average" child—

<sup>1</sup> W. de la Mare : *Early One Morning*. (Faber and Faber.)

<sup>2</sup> Bertrand Russell : *On Education*. (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.)

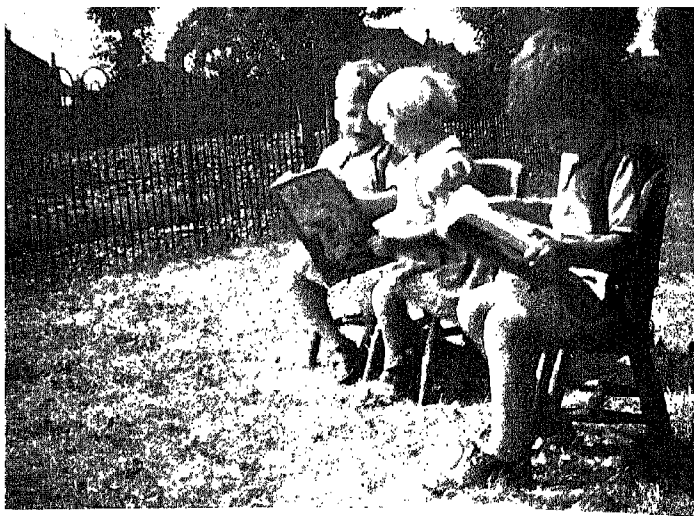
<sup>3</sup> Karl Bühler : *Mental Development of the Child*. (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd.)



*The teacher's first duty  
is to study her children*



*A lesson in hand-washing*



*Picture books in the nursery and well-illustrated storybooks for older children should be kept in good condition*



but "averages"—like statistics can be elusive and misleading. "The average age of three children who are respectively 1, 3, 14 years of age is 6, but what relation has that figure to the three children? There may be appropriate examples of what is deemed an average intelligence or intellect, but where shall we find an average mind, soul, or self? If that is our query we might as well live in wait for the average of nineteen sunsets or seek the average pot of gold at the foot of the average rainbow. The only human being competent to reveal what any child is is that child himself . . ."<sup>1</sup>

The teacher should endeavour to cultivate the power of exact observation of the children with whom she is dealing, not the group as a whole, but each child one by one in order to be able to understand more than a good nurse does. She should endeavour to avoid, as far as possible, the tendency to appraise a child until her study has been many-sided and carried on for a considerable time. This is particularly true of children who for any reason appear to be difficult or in need of definite guidance. It is only fools who "rush in where angels fear to tread," and a false beginning in dealing with a child can often prevent help from being effective later, because of the attitude it has aroused. Wherever it is practical to arrange—through the interchange and sharing of duties—team work among the school staff in compiling data about each child, it is desirable to do so in collaboration with the doctor and the nurse. Each teacher can follow the line of research that most interests her, and if conferences are held periodically, in which all aspects of the health and behaviour of particular children are discussed, a truer estimation of their development and needs can be arrived at than if carried out by one teacher alone. The scheme for studying children in the Appendix could become the basis of such team work. To quote Jung in

<sup>1</sup> Walter de la Mare : *Op. cit.*

this connection: "Whatever we look at, however we look we see only through our own eyes. For this reason a science is never made by one man but by many."

No true assessment can be made until every aspect of the child's life has been investigated—health, past history, home conditions, the attitude of parents as well as the child's behaviour in nursery school hours—and this should be continued over a considerable period of time. First impressions of children are often very deceptive. Many children whose home conditions are unsatisfactory appear to be dull and backward when first they enter the nursery school and are often far below the developmental standard of their age. Yet in a few months' time such children may show themselves to be normal in every respect.

Observation should continue for a time also because children pass through temporary phases and adopt forms of behaviour that are not necessarily typical of them but which are due to temporary conditions, perhaps of health, perhaps the presence or absence of a particular person at home or school. A child's own emotions sometimes act and react on one another in a way that causes surprising consequences. For instance, it is often the gentle, sensitive child who becomes aggressive, aroused by an uprush of sympathy for some child or adult whom he feels to be treated harshly. Aggression in such a case is but a passing phase, and it would be misleading to write that child down as "aggressive" as it would be to deal with the aggression itself. It is the other emotion, sympathy, that is the dominant characteristic in such a case.

Close and continuous study of children and their play will provide the teacher with a mass of material which is of little use until evaluated. With this object every teacher should make a comprehensive study of some of the valuable literature that has been published during the



last twenty years during which research has been world-wide. Karl Bühler believes a study of the first year of life to be as important to the teacher as embryology is to the biologist. Knowledge of the usual course of child development will help her to use her own observations. It should also enable her to decide whether each child is growing satisfactorily and to recognize deviations from the normal; intellectual, emotional or physical. This should help her to determine when to render first-aid or when the services of a specialist should be sought. Early symptoms of physical or nervous defects in sight, hearing; posture, etc., if detected promptly, can be rectified and serious troubles be prevented. Emotional disturbances, intellectual retardation and social maladjustment can be easily recognized by a trained observer. If quickly taken in hand the possibility of future ill-health can be eliminated.

### THE TEACHER'S TEMPERAMENT AND ATTITUDE

Children readily become attached to their nursery school teachers who, when they are loved, come near to the mother in the confidence they inspire. Being very easily influenced they are inclined to accept their teacher's standards. This throws a great responsibility upon nursery school teachers, many aspects of which have been discussed in the previous chapters and need not be repeated. The teacher must obviously be unfailingly just and fair in all her dealings, must never break a promise nor betray a trust. If she falls below this standard not only does she forfeit any influence for good that she might otherwise possess but—what is more serious—she may undermine the child's faith generally and mutilate, even if she does not destroy, the early shoots of the religious life. Children are very quick to read facial expressions and to sense the presence of emotions that adults often think hidden. Depression,

distrust, dislike, impatience, however well suppressed, are often revealed in tones of voice or tension of muscles that the alert ears and eyes of children rarely miss. Teachers who are habitually anxious, suspicious or irritable and those who suffer from what Burt calls unkindly "the teacher's ingrained tendency to rebuke," invariably make children restless and sometimes quarrelsome. Children are helped most by those who are naturally cheerful, optimistic, and friendly. "A quiet self-command is an indispensable trait in a teacher. It is not the same thing as a deliberate self-control which comes as a result of effort, but, on the contrary is an outward expression of an inner poise. If ever that Scripture phrase 'in quietness and confidence shall be your strength' holds true, it is in the realm of child training."<sup>1</sup> The teacher who is quietly confident, consistent in behaviour, calm and dispassionate, inevitably creates an atmosphere in the nursery that brings out the best in children. They become spontaneous, natural, fearless and friendly. The good teacher—like the good parent—will be a sustaining influence, but relatively passive. She should give the child a feeling of security and of being wanted for himself and strengthen this feeling by a well-ordered day in which he feels at home and knows what to expect.

Most people live up or down to the opinion held by those with whom they are closely associated. With children this is particularly true and their behaviour is much influenced for good when they know that teachers love them and believe in their essential goodness. This does not mean that the teacher should live in a fantasy world with eyes closed to the many undesirable forms of behaviour which children, on occasion, adopt. It means that she should be able to differentiate between conduct that may be extremely unpleasant and which she

<sup>1</sup> L. Wagoner: *Op. cit.*

must help the child to alter, and the child himself, whom she must love under all circumstances. If she investigates the cause of the behaviour, the knowledge gained will often serve to throw new light and create new feelings. *Tout savoir c'est tout pardonner.* She can then help the child with gentleness and good humour to alter what is awry, to overcome his weakness and re-establish himself in his own confidence. The relation between child and teacher should be made pleasurable. Force should never be allowed to spoil it, either the force of the adult in authority or that of the child winning his way by bad behaviour. Courtesy—a flower of the spirit—is not always valued in dealing with children as fully as it is expected from them, yet it is of very great importance. Speaking about children in their presence should always be avoided. Even if they cannot hear what is being said, the fact that they are being discussed makes for uneasiness and self-consciousness and has as bad an effect as hurrying them along by a push, interrupting them when they are speaking and not paying proper attention when being addressed by them. These are acts of discourtesy which adults do not adopt to one another, but do not always avoid with children. Nicknames are equally discourteous, and it may have a permanent deleterious effect on a child to be called “butter fingers,” “silly billy,” “fidgety Phil,” “clumsy Jack,” “bundle of rubbish,” etc. Children resent them only slightly less than the patronizing “clever boy” or “nice girl.” A sense of fun is an indispensable qualification, but it should not take the form of nicknames. Readiness to laugh with children at their own fun, and to help them to laugh when situations are difficult goes far towards the solving of problems. Laughter which makes for good physical health is itself evidence of good mental health. The teacher who has not learned to laugh does not belong to the nursery school. An adult who has forgotten

how to play is also less likely to be a success than one who can enter into children's games with enjoyment.

It cannot be stressed too often that the teacher's influence is greatest when she is least conscious of it. It is what she is that influences children who, at this age, are prone to identify themselves with the adults they love and to copy them both consciously and unconsciously. Her every gesture, word and facial expression, the daintiness and suitability of her clothes, her hair, the movement of her well-kept hands, her walk and manner of opening windows and closing doors, handling flowers and speaking to colleagues—each and all these things are noted and have their influence on the child. The conscientious teacher will, therefore, take herself in hand and prepare carefully by training herself to be as one whose "ways are ways of gentleness and all her paths are peace."

#### RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THE HELPER

One of the many duties falling to the teacher lies in the direction of training her helpers in the duties expected of them. This is essential for two reasons. Helpers are usually young girls who spend two or four years, 14-18 or 16-18, in the nursery school or class as a preparation for, or while waiting to enter, other work. They should be fruitful years coming as they do early in adolescence when old beliefs are being replaced by new doubts and idealism is on a rising tide. Many of the preoccupations of childhood present themselves in new form to the fourteen-year-old adolescent. There is the need of physical control brought about by a wave of bodily clumsiness that so often accompanies the onset of puberty. The transition to womanhood moreover brings with it the need for a new kind of social adjustment. At the same time there is a desire to understand and master the new problems of living of which their increasing bodily

and intellectual development makes them conscious.

The adolescent has another problem from which the child is spared—an awareness of her “self,” her ego, which makes for self-consciousness on the one hand and bursts of conscientiousness on the other. Whereas the child asks, “Is it right?” the adolescent enquires, “Am I right?” She experiences a new desire for service—to use her powers for some wider purpose than her own interests. For the helper’s own sake, as she crosses the threshold into womanhood, the years in the nursery schools should, if possible, help her to form an attitude towards both childhood and authority that are likely to bring poise and easy adjustment. Whether the young helper eventually becomes a teacher, a nurse, or a mother, she will certainly become a woman, and whatever her sphere of life, her equilibrium as an individual, inspired by tenderness and love, loyalty and devotion will be as important as common-sense in the care of her health, cleanliness and her personal appearance.

There are many advantages in having these young helpers. When good, they are like big sisters who can play with children in a way that is valuable in its difference from the more thoughtful play of an adult. If they are physically strong and energetic, they can save the teacher much wear and tear, but as they are young their hours should be short, and an adult woman’s service should never be expected of them. The chief drawback of these helpers, is that they are unqualified, and it is almost impossible to avoid giving them some duties with and some responsibilities for the children. The teacher needs their assistance, however, and the contact with the children makes the helper’s work living and real to them. Superintendents and group teachers should be able to guide their helpers in understanding more and more fully the nature and needs of the individual children in whose education they are co-operating, and something of the

physical and mental make-up of children generally. This task is as important as any falling to the staff, for without it much of their work with the children is bound to be undone. It so often happens that things the teacher has patiently trained the child to do day after day, are hurried over when the helper is given responsibility. This happens not because she is grudging of her service but, on the contrary, because she is so anxious to do what is expected of her and to win approval for the rapid accomplishment of her duties that the children are of secondary consideration. "Come and get washed," says a helper to a child with many pieces of his jigsaw puzzle still unplaced as he ponders over the shapes to be filled, adding, "Here! you'll never get that done in time," and hey presto! the puzzle is bundled into its box unfinished while the bewildered and resentful child is dragged to the toilet. Such situations as these arise constantly unless the daily routine makes the scramble that frequently exists unnecessary, or the helper understands something of the real purpose of nursery education and appreciates that her first loyalty must be to the children. One excellent helper was an ex-elementary school child who, years previously, had been a child in the same nursery school. When the superintendent was demonstrating with basin and towel how the helper should assist children with their toilet by letting them imitate her movements, the helper said, "You really do not need to show me this, Miss — I was a child here once, and I don't think I have forgotten anything." Then she added in a grown-up manner, "That, of course, was before your time." The way in which this young girl "educated" the children whatever her duties was as great a testimony to the work of the previous superintendent as she could desire.

Weekly sessions, or a daily few minutes given to training the helper is time saved. Where the helpers are encouraged to keep simple records of individual

children, the observation that is involved and the necessity for keeping hands discreetly "off" is in itself a valuable form of training. Conferences held periodically to discuss these observations and the children whose doings they record are also useful. At such sessions, questions such as "What new playthings do you think he should have?" or "What do you think would be the best way of helping him to overcome this or that?" can be discussed. Other practical problems could be also considered in a way likely to reveal the deeper purpose that lies beneath such simple procedure as learning to use the toilet properly. Untrained helpers are now being replaced in many places by girls qualifying for the National Nurses Certificate and who undertake work in the nursery school as part of their training course. Concurrently with this practical experience they attend lectures and discussions on the care and training of children. The assistance of these girls should be most helpful in the nursery school and far better than that given by totally unqualified helpers. At the same time the experience should be of great value to the young student in her preparation as a nursery nurse.

#### CO-OPERATION WITH MOTHERS

Nursery education, whether provided in schools or in classes, is intended to supplement the home and the nurture and care provided there. It can discharge this duty adequately only if there is close and friendly contact between home and school, and understanding and mutual respect between teacher and parents. Both have their contributions to give, and the child is served better where such a partnership exists than where either stands alone. The mother has the greatest and most lasting influence and to help her is often the best way of helping the child.

It is not easy to give suggestions as to the best way of establishing this contact without running the risk of becoming a typical "Aunt" of journalistic fame, who advises on how to make friends and keep lovers and many other intimate matters. Every one must be guided by her own feeling after careful consideration of the character of the mother to be approached. The first move must, as a rule, come from the teacher. Mothers are a little diffident, conscious of superficial differences of speech and education. It is for the teacher to show that fundamentally they are both interested in the same matter—Tommy or Mary—and that the parents' help is necessary if the school is to understand and serve the child well. The response of the parents is usually very real, when once they realize that the teacher is animated by genuine friendliness and not mere duty or patronage. She soon becomes a friend of the family, invited to a cup of tea and given all the information required—and more! Mothers accept nursery teachers even more easily than they do those of older children, because the mother does not associate the former with "teaching," and many of them stand in awe of the "superiority" of the teachers. The nursery teacher is, like themselves, concerned with washing, dressing, feeding and putting to bed, and as such is more nearly an equal. They not only tell of Tommy's food fads and Mary's bedtime tricks, but want details as to what the teacher does to combat these. The way is now clear for real co-operation between home and school. Before long it becomes possible to plan together and so to give the child the balanced regime he needs—food, sleep and play. The responsibility of the Nursery School does not end when the day is over. What happens to the child when he leaves for home is equally important and much good work is undone if the child is allowed to play in the street, to go late to the cinema or to be out of bed



till all hours. Thus as soon as possible opportunity should be made to discuss her child's whole day with every mother.

It is a wise move to invite parents, aunts and all members of the child's family to visit the school and to watch the children in their occupations, meals or sleep. They can sit quietly and look on as any other visitor does, and when a member of staff can spare time to explain this and draw attention to that, the whole procedure becomes more significant.

Few people can watch children busy at their play in the peaceful atmosphere of the nursery school without realizing afresh the beauty of children and their charm. Their quiet happiness singing as they play, their friendly overtures to one another, the orderly way in which they replace toys and their independence generally—awaken a new belief in the possibilities of these little ones. Mothers are particularly responsive for they, more than most women, have dreamed dreams and seen visions. A feature of the nursery regime that particularly impresses them is the way in which children are controlled without commands, scolds, threats or any appearance of authority which is replaced by just a friendly suggestion given in a matter-of-fact way to which children respond without question. They see children eating food that they refuse at home, putting themselves to bed without any fuss or discussion, washing and doing for themselves in a way they had never believed possible. They "ponder all these things in their hearts" and the reverence for children that this arouses should bring with it a high sense of the privilege and responsibility of motherhood.

Motherhood is the one vitally important profession for which women are untrained (and unpaid). Collaboration with mothers by the nursery school should follow on the beginning made in that direction at the maternity centre.

Informative talks, accompanied by discussion, can be the means of transforming the child's home-life and the life of the mother, too. Talks can include such subjects as how to budget so as to buy the most suitable food out of wages—First Aid—Care of sick children—Principles of discipline—Clothes—Occupations for a wet Sunday—the list is well-nigh inexhaustible and mothers are always ready to suggest subjects themselves. They delight, too, to hear children's stories and songs and to spend some time purely socially. For informal talks with individual mothers the records kept of her child by the staff will provide a good basis for much helpful discussion and for hearing the mother's point of view. These talks, to be really effective and to "get home," must be supplemented by visits to the nursery school to see the principle in practice. Demonstration carries conviction that it is not just talk! No nursery teacher should feel happy about the response of her mothers until those who are free to do so have made a habit of dropping in to watch for a while as often as they can. The lot of the working-class mother is a hard and often a lonely one, and the visits to school, with opportunities of meeting other parents and the feeling of genuine friendship with the teacher as well as the superintendent, are fully valued. Mothers can offer their services to the school in many ways such as bathing children, helping with cooking, washing, mending, etc., and whenever possible they should be accepted. It turns the nursery into "our" school and strengthens the sense of responsibility to co-operate with it in the care for the child out of school hours. Dr. Ralph Crowley, late Senior School Medical Officer of the Board of Education, once said that in his opinion collaboration with the mothers was as important a feature of the nursery school as work with the children. It is far-reaching, affecting not only a particular child but the whole family.

The work with the mothers is so important and so many-sided that if carried out fully it makes heavy demands on the teacher, too heavy in view of her already exacting day. On the whole the scale of staffing in nursery schools is very inadequate and it should be possible to supplement it by grants for adult education. If this were done the work of training helpers and other unqualified members of staff could be done much more thoroughly, and lecture courses and discussions for parents could be organized.

When free kindergartens for children of three years of age were introduced into Adelaide, South Australia, the mothers of the first one in Franklin Street were so appreciative of the improvement in their children that they began to spread the news to other districts. They concentrated on Bowden, a neighbouring district in which there was considerable poverty, and paid house to house visits. They volunteered to keep house for Bowden mothers, to enable them to spend the day in Franklin Street. As a consequence the mothers of these two places worked together and made out so strong a case for a kindergarten in Bowden that this was the place chosen for the second one. As a consequence of the education of mothers that has been a feature of the work there and of the keen interest taken by them, mothers are always represented on the managing committees of the schools.

When all mothers begin to think in terms of "our" child instead of "my" child and learn to combine with doctors, teachers and welfare workers in securing the best for all children, the democratic ideal inherent in the 1944 Education Act should be realized.

## CHAPTER XIII

### TEACHING AND TRAINING

#### THE PURPOSE OF TRAINING

THE first part of this book deals with the nature of the child's growth. Many illustrations have been given to show that the desire and the capacity for learning and for acquiring skill arise spontaneously from within the child at different stages, without help or influence from without.

Emphasis has been placed on the strength of the actual impulse, since this is what provides the impetus for growth, maturation and learning. It is not, however, the whole process and the part that the teacher has to play in teaching and training has already been touched upon in previous chapters. Knowledge, understanding and skill do not, after all, appear spontaneously nor full grown, as Pallas Athena from the forehead of Zeus! They have to be built up by the process of learning and experience "It is never permissible to ask of a function, Does this come from within or without, but rather how much of it comes from within and how much from without—for both these influences always share in its making, only varying in degree at different times. If inner development predominates we speak of ripening, if outer is more marked, we call it learning."<sup>1</sup>

Despite the fact that the child has an inner guide and moves spontaneously in the way of growth, no child is likely to develop satisfactorily if left entirely to nature, however wisely and well equipped his material environment. He needs the human assistance not only of other children, but of adults who can teach and train him by

<sup>1</sup> W. Stern: *Op. cit.*

guidance and suggestion in the task he is endeavouring to accomplish—that of becoming master of his impulses and of adapting himself to the demands of life. The purpose of training is, therefore, not to bring the child under the domination of adults, or to prepare him for any specific kind of behaviour or “conditioned response.” It is to help him to develop all his powers to the full, to bring them into harmonious correspondence and to set him on the path towards the achievement of a free personality. The free man is one who is well-balanced and master of himself. Over development or under-development in any direction, whether mental, emotional or physical, acts like a tyrant that keeps a man enslaved and imprisoned. The need of learning and the place of teaching are both sometimes overlooked in the nursery school through the desire to leave the children free. This is however a short view for it is only the child who has acquired self-control who can be really free.

#### THE NATURE OF EARLY TRAINING

Having in mind the purpose of training, it is evident that the nature of training given in nursery years, when the child is susceptible and amenable requires careful thought. If over-emphasized, or of the wrong type, it may become a means of enslaving the child, rather than of helping him towards freedom, and may arrest growth at an infantile stage. “Habits forced upon the child by domination, or keeping him to set routine for years, rob him of a chance to be spontaneous. He becomes a machine and more closely resembles the institutional child. . . . He, thus, does not become an independent individual, absorbing experience, learning by mistakes and success to judge and think for himself. The road of progress towards constructive living is not open to him.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Appraisalment of the Child”—*Growth and Development*. (Report of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection.) (D. Appleton Century Co.)

The young child is very amenable and a lover of routine, and in this fact lies one of the dangers of nursery education unless conducted by those who respect the human spirit. To "condition" children into submissive, docile acceptance of unthinking behaviour and routine that has no meaning to them and serves only to establish habits; to have them shout or march, or perform other tricks at the word of command, is to do violence to these little ones.

Certain habits are important and should be trained early, primarily those concerned with the maintenance of the body in good health which leave the individual free to pursue wider interests. There should be regularity in such matters as eating, water-drinking, elimination and sleep. Acquiring a liking for suitable food and good habits of eating, mastication and breathing, as well as habits of personal cleanliness and washing before meals, should all be learned early. All these habits are important and can be inculcated by the regular routine of the nursery school to which children adapt themselves quickly.

Except for such habits as these, training should be concerned more with forming attitudes than with acquiring definite forms of behaviour. It would be unsuitable, for instance, to teach "good manners" at this age, though very important to cultivate an attitude of friendliness, love and sociability from which "good manners," even if not conventional ones, arise naturally. When the child has become readily sociable, which has been shown to be a gradual process—for the psychic life has its own rhythm of growth—he is ready to be trained in conventional phraseology and gesture. "Please" and "thank you" and all usual forms of courtesy should be used unflinchingly by the adult in her dealings with the child and, instead of demanding these expressions she can often give the suggestion, "People like one to say 'Thank you'"—

"It's polite to say please" . . . which should be quite as effective and produce results in time.

By four or thereabouts when children begin to be protective towards one another they adopt the manner of speech of the adults with whom they associate. If the teacher is always courteous in tone of voice as well as in words, her children will become the same, by imitation. Training in any kind of specific responses, given before they have meaning and purpose for the child, may have a stultifying effect on growth. "The over-taught child is father of the newspaper reading, advertisement believing, propaganda swallowing, demagogue-led men, who make modern democracy a farce."<sup>1</sup>

#### ATTITUDES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND INDEPENDENCE

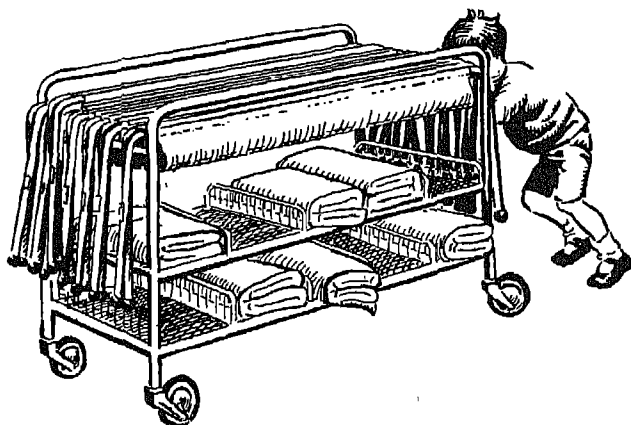
What is chiefly necessary is for the child to acquire an attitude of self-reliance and independence, for this gives rise to many other valuable qualities that also become habitual, such as persistence, patience, resourcefulness and initiative. It can be induced by "so planning the environment and our procedure that a dynamic method of action will become habitual in the lives of our children. By dynamic method I mean a quality which we recognize and approve when we see it in action; a readiness to get to work on material at hand, a tendency to investigate and experiment in constructive ways and to sustain and develop this attitude."<sup>2</sup>

Children should have their own possessions, such as tooth and hair brushes, handkerchiefs, bed, blanket, etc., a place of their own in which to keep them and should be expected to fetch and use them when necessary. There should be a complete absence of any mechanical routine and formal procedure such as walking in line, holding on to one another's pinafores when moving

<sup>1</sup> Aldous Huxley: *Proper Studies*. (Chatto and Windus.)

<sup>2</sup> H. Johnson: *Children in the Nursery School*.

about, handkerchief "drill" at specific times. Children should be trained to self-reliant actions and expected to think for themselves and to solve the various situations that arise in daily life in terms of present need, and not as habit-trained custom. The daily arrangements should be



Bed and Blanket Trolley used in Bolton

planned to provide opportunities for self-help, such as removing furniture, setting tables, arranging flowers, fetching and replacing their own toys. The "time-table," if such skeleton-like framework as exists in a nursery school can be so called, should give ample time for children to carry on these occupations in a leisurely way, and for thinking out the various acts involved. Learning to change his own garments, fasten his shoes, etc., are occupations that have meaning and purpose to a child and afford training in manipulative skill as well as in independence. He gains real education from persisting in such tasks.

Though generally speaking the child should be encouraged to do things for himself, this can be overdone.



Nature's plan for human growth includes a long period of dependence, emotionally as well as physically. The child whose impulse is towards independence also desires adults to do things for and with him. It strengthens the bond of affection between them and helps the child to feel protected, loved and cared for.

#### FREEDOM THROUGH SELF-MASTERY

In trying to train children to be independent and self-reliant, the teacher has in the child a strong ally. Two to four years of age is characterized by this attitude and every normally developing child insists upon doing things unaided, and shows by his obstinacy and rebelliousness how eager he is to do so. The need of leaving children free to give full expression to their impulses and instincts has been very much insisted upon in modern education and it is important to recognize the difference between giving the child this kind of liberty and training him for freedom. They are not one and the same process and some of the ultra modern schools are doing a great disservice in abolishing all rules and regulations. "We are coming to realize more and more that the true freedom of the child is not objective but subjective freedom . . . if the child is to have true freedom for his personality he must learn control."<sup>1</sup>

Aldous Huxley echoes this opinion. "Here in passing it may be remarked that "modern" schools may be too "modern" by half. There is a danger that children may be given more freedom than they can profitably deal with, more responsibility than they desire or know how to take. To give children too much freedom or responsibility is to impose a strain which many of them find distressing and even exhausting."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Hadfield: *The Making of a Free Personality*. New Era September 1936.

<sup>2</sup> Aldous Huxley: *Ends and Means*.

Harriet Johnson, whose experience of nursery school education was obtained in a spirit of true research, was very emphatic on the need of limiting the freedom given in the nursery school to such aspects of the child's activities as he could reasonably use and benefit from. She says : " In evaluating any school set up and judging the children under it, it is very necessary to take into consideration the fact that the children's reactions are conditioned by the environment in which they are placed. This includes adults with their attitudes towards the children and the interest in their pursuits carried on even when the programme is not obviously in their control. In other words, environment and literally free activities are impossible and undesirable. In fact freedom, in the sense of lack of direction, would not be education. A group of little children assembled in an environment rich in constructive possibilities and left to their own resources would probably develop along the line of the weaknesses of its members and could surely not gain group continuity . . . It is obvious that no social organization could be evolved by such immature individuals. Our aim is to avoid dictation, to let the children learn by self-initiated experiences and experiments as long as it is within our control and whenever possible to allow this condition within the environment to furnish the corrective or stimulating impulses."<sup>1</sup>

Helping children to be free is a long process in which the teacher must use her authority wisely and well. She should keep as much as possible in the background but be always alert, observant and ready to come forward when the child is in need of guidance on some matter that he cannot settle by himself. The secret lies, as Hadfield shows, in helping the child to acquire self-mastery. Dr. Montessori follows a very definite technique in making children free. Through its adoption the children

<sup>1</sup> H. Johnson : *Op. cit.*

progress by way of activities involving self-control to a degree of poise and power that is unusual in young children.

The child has to build up this self-control and poise gradually. The first step is through the acquisition of muscular control and there are many ways in which this can be pursued in the nursery school. Free running, climbing, swinging, balancing, hanging, lifting and active play generally afford good training. Opportunity for such play should be so graded that four to five-year-olds are able to perform more difficult feats and exercise greater skill and control than are required of the child of two. This principle should be observed in the various domestic occupations in which children like to take part—setting tables, serving meals, sweeping crumbs—as well as in matters of personal hygiene.

Though the child should be under no compulsion to engage in these domestic occupations, should he desire to do so—as practically every child does—he should be definitely taught the correct way of handling the tools and utensils involved so that he may do so with dexterity. These occupations afford excellent training in muscular co-ordination and control which lead to grace and beauty of movement as well as to a heightened sense of order. If on the other hand, rough, careless handling is permitted, the result is only clumsiness and a low standard. The two-year-old who wants to help to set a table should be shown how to carry a tray in the proper way and his task might at first consist of carrying trays and piling them neatly on the waiters' table. Then he can learn to carry an object on a tray, a spoon, a cup or a plate, until eventually he is capable of carrying bowls of soup and jugs of milk swiftly without spilling them. There is no educative value in permitting a child who has not acquired the skill, to undertake any task beyond his powers, and to carry it out in an inefficient

way on which no comment can be made because it represents the child's standard. Whatever the activity, the child should be helped to build up skill by learning how to handle things correctly and by being given opportunity for increasingly difficult acts. The baby sweeping crumbs should have the pan held so that he can give his attention to watching the brush. Later he can perform the more skilful task of holding the brush in one hand and the pan in the other without all the crumbs going under the pan. Though when learning to feed themselves feeders can be given, children should be trained and expected to eat their meal without spilling and by three should be skilful enough not to require feeders. Dr. Montessori has shown the way all those actions can be taught by actual demonstration, the teacher having her own hand-washing bowl or tooth-brush or towel side by side with each child. "Do it like this—and now like this." Showing, reminding, helping should be done patiently, day after day until the habit is well established. Children do not learn by being told to do things but by repeating the action many times. This helpful demonstration should be given to children one by one. Attempts to take a short cut or get quick results by teaching children in groups is, at this age, time lost. Little children vary very much and each must learn to use his hands in ways that are most akin to his natural movements, which the teacher should study. The purpose of this detailed and exact training is obviously not only for this lesser object of carrying trays and using brooms in a special manner. It is to ensure for each child such co-ordination and control as will make him master of his muscles, to enable him to achieve success in the things he attempts, and to save him from the sense of frustration that comes when desire outruns the possibility of achievement. The child of five and over wants to do difficult things with his hands, making and handling real models.

By that age, if carefully trained to dexterous movements while co-ordination is being established, his hands are skilled tools at his command. This training would be unwise and dangerous if the nursery school did not also provide numerous opportunities for self-directed experimental manipulation and play.

Before giving a lesson the teacher should rehearse the act for herself and plan its moves so that it can be free from cumbersome fumbling and be both clear and efficient. She will probably be surprised to find how in-expert she is herself when tying a bow or emptying a bowl.

All domestic occupations are more valuable if performed on the child's own initiative. He should, by constant suggestion, be trained to be aware of their necessity and encouraged to rise to the occasion rather than to follow a mechanical routine of "duties." The nursery school provides its best education and training by establishing a way of life in which every day situations arising out of life, stimulate the child to purposeful activities. In the initial stages his attention has to be attracted and if necessary the activity suggested. "If you have all your toys would you close the cupboard? it makes the room tidy" or "If you have finished with this would you put it back in its place?—then you will know where to find it to-morrow." Again, "Water doesn't look nice on the floor, let us see if we can find a cloth to wipe it up." Then "Are your hands clean enough to use picture books or do you think you had better wash them first?" After a time such suggestions become unnecessary. Children learn from one another and quickly fall into the habit of attentive observation and appropriate action. They are passing through a stage in which they are sensitive to order and orderly arrangement. This makes them receptive and responsive to training. In schools where this training is given,

children can often be seen closing doors without suggestion, straightening pictures, putting fresh water in vases, wiping it up when spilt with the same interest and satisfaction as they show in other forms of purposeful activity. Over-scrupulousness about cleanliness should, however, be avoided. Cleanliness is an adult conception to which children grow gradually, and undue early pressure of adult standards can be a cause of strain and conflict. This is true also of tidiness. So long as the child is at play untidiness of toys and material does not matter, concentration is more important. The play over, the child enjoys clearing up for himself.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL POISE

The training that can be given in regard to emotional control and social adjustment has been dealt with in chapters on these subjects. Further comment is unnecessary except to stress again the importance of making the nursery school a place of joy in which children feel secure and loved. This the teacher can do partly by building a framework of ordered routine in which the child can feel free and safe and partly by preventing children from becoming over-excited, protecting them from their own weaknesses and from interfering unduly with others. When children have playthings that satisfy their changing needs, by four or thereabouts they begin to play with greater concentration and to attend more exclusively to the work in hand. This absorbed attention has a very integrating effect and as it becomes habitual a very noticeable change is apparent in the child's emotional and social behaviour, as well as in his standard of achievement. He becomes quieter, more serene, and seems to develop an inner glow of joy; he is more affectionate and considerate and eager to help other children. Whereas until now his play materials have been chosen rather indiscriminately and he has played

with them without long sustained purpose or goal, he begins to choose with forethought, giving evidence of working to a plan and remaining absorbed for a much longer period. He plays less for subjective satisfaction and more to attain an objective purpose. His play has in fact become work. He appears suddenly to "grow up" and both character and attitude assume definite form. This change has been likened by Dr. Montessori to the process of crystallization that takes place in a chemical in solution when the point of saturation is reached. All that was invisible, diffused and nebulous assumes a definite and often beautiful shape. From now onwards the child's "work" and conduct are on a much higher level. This "crystallization" of personality does not come about inevitably at this or any age, but is consequent upon the giving of absorbed attention to occupations that exactly correspond to some inner need.

#### TRAINING SHOULD KEEP PACE WITH MATURATION

Reference has already been made to sensitive periods at which the child is particularly responsive to education and training. To attempt to train a skill before the brain and nervous system are sufficiently developed for the child to be receptive to the particular teaching is wasteful of his time and nervous energy. This is true of training generally. For instance, no intelligent teacher discourages a child by pointing out his mistakes—if for example he has arranged graded bricks in wrong order in building a tower, through lack of sensory discrimination. She leaves him to his play, puts him within reach of such toys as will quicken his powers of observation, and waits until, as a result of exercise and continued development, he recognizes the different sizes of his cubes and builds correctly.

To give another example, it is harmful if not generally useless to try to train the child to be unselfish while he is still in the egocentric stage. Children who are forced to

share their toys or to play together before there is a natural impulse to do so, rarely become really sociable and unselfish, though they may adopt an outward appearance of these qualities to win adult approval. "Beware of over-estimating the ability of children to live easily up to our moral or personal standards or to understand adult customs. Because the child can talk and use some of our words, we think he can be made to feel as we do."<sup>1</sup>

### OBEDIENCE

One of the commonest fallacies in regard to early education is that children should be trained to be obedient while young and plastic. Not only is the act of obeying one that requires a great deal more self-control than young children possess, but it is also a form of behaviour against which the child reacts with vigour when will-power is developing and obstinacy is at its height. The child must find himself and be in control of himself before he can obey. To make the child accept the ruling of others too early weakens the foundation of both moral and intellectual independence, and diverts the natural flow of energy from inner to external control. Such misuse of authority may bring about rebellion, or may, on the other hand make the child excessively suggestible and dependent.

The child's unwillingness to obey does not mean that he expects or wants the adult to abandon all control of him. Were she to do so, it would have a frightening effect upon him. "The impulse to accept guidance of the parent, or adult in loco parentis is deep-rooted and of biological significance. It is found in all mammals and the safety and protection of the young is bound up in the spontaneous reaction given to a firmly expressed parental wish. Every normal young child not only gives

<sup>1</sup> Susan Isaacs: *Health and Education in the Nursery*. (George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.)



obedience if requested in the right way and place, but actually expects it. It gives him a feeling of safety and security to know that he has a strong adult in charge, and in the framework of this protection he feels courageous in his own ventures."<sup>1</sup>

What is the right way and place? There can be no precise answer to this question, as the right way differs at different ages and stages of growth. An unwavering attitude of finality in dealing with all behaviour difficulties helps the child most when he is establishing a habitual attitude towards conduct. If he feels the adult to be wavering or if the same situation is treated in one manner on one day and differently on the next; if the child is alternately petted and scolded he cannot know what is expected of him. At the worst he develops an emotional attitude towards praise and blame and may resort to all sorts of tricks in order to avoid disapproval and gain approval, or to get his own way.

As a rule three years of age is not a time at which children are responsive to training in obedience. Obstinacy is at its highest peak, for it is the period of psychological weaning when the child's every impulse is directed towards independence. He wants to do things by and for himself and his disciplining should consist in giving him every opportunity to do so. In aiding him to be self-reliant and approving it, the teacher is laying the foundation for real obedience later by helping the child towards self-control. She is also training him to regard authority as a co-operative and protective influence to which, when the time is ripe he can respond with trust. Authority sensibly administered increases the child's faith and desire to obey and enables him to see it as impersonal. All true discipline should work with the natural flow of children's vitality, and should only

<sup>1</sup> Susan Isaacs: *Social Development in Young Children*. (George Routledge and Sons, Ltd.)

secondarily take the form of restraint or prohibition. It should give the child the opportunity of doing what his impulses are urging him to do, and not drive him to bottle up his energies until they explode with violence. "Discipline has a double effect, one is the elimination of undesirable modes of behaviour; the other is the encouragement and development of desirable modes of behaviour. Many parents (and teachers) see this relationship to the child only in the terms of the first. They look upon their function as a somewhat negative one of securing obedience from the child rather than the positive one of developing desirable traits. Obedience in and for itself is of little value in adulthood. Those who can obey and do nothing more occupy relatively minor positions when compared with those in whom some measure of initiative, spontaneity and zeal for living has been maintained."<sup>1</sup>

Needless to say there should be no punishment in the nursery school. If the child is difficult, defiant or unresponsive to adults, the cause is to be found, as a rule, in the environment, or in unwise handling, either in the school or in the home. Organization has been spoken of elsewhere as a framework that gives security. It should never become a cage in which the child feels thwarted or restrained. A child who has opportunity to use his energy in satisfying ways is rarely naughty. It is when energy has no adequate outlet that explosions occur as steam will burst a kettle without a vent. The solution lies in altering the environment rather than in punishing the child.

Sometimes lapses into unsatisfactory behaviour are the result of want of skill or development which only training and growth can cure. Sometimes bad behaviour is caused by the teacher's attitude. If she does not really enjoy her work or love children, they very quickly

<sup>1</sup> John Anderson: *Happy Childhood*. (Appleton Century Company.)

sense this and feel insecure in her charge. Naughtiness is a defence mechanism with which they seek, subconsciously to protect themselves. They become less responsive and more defiant—anxious to separate themselves from those whom they do not trust. In none of these cases is punishment the remedy—for in none of these is the child at fault.

### STAGE IN DEVELOPING OBEDIENCE

In training the child in obedience the earliest form of request should take the form of an invitation rather than a command. "Would you like?" or "Will you?" etc., and the child, given the option, should be free to accept or reject the offer. At two his interests are subjective and he will do as he is asked if it is agreeable to him, or if he is personally attached to the adult who makes the request. When the period of excessive obstinacy is over, requests can be expressed more positively, but they should still be more suggestive than commanding. "It would be helpful if you did," etc. Children who have been treated reasonably and given opportunity to gain self-control should by about four or five years of age be ready to acquiesce in such requests, though not necessarily on every occasion. It is not until the child is nearly six or thereabouts when more objective interests have evolved that he is ready to obey in the true sense of the word—that is, willing to accept and act upon another's wishes. By this age he should have reached the stage in his play of setting himself tasks. He obeys adults and does what he is asked with a feeling of pride, born of the power to achieve and to carry through a task. If he is not forced to obey before he is mature in this way the child will become willing and anxious to work with authority and not instinctively against it, as he is at two to three years of age.

## WHEN OBEDIENCE SHOULD BE REQUIRED

In all Nursery Schools and at home there are matters in which the child must be restrained and obedience required for his safety and well-being. Fewer restraints are required in the school than is usual in the average home where there is much that could be a source of danger to the child. The teacher should decide on the things a child should be expected to do or not to do without question, and those in which obedience is desirable but not essential. The number of things in the first category should be as few as possible. They should include such matters as rough play, aggressive behaviour towards other children, careless treatment of school things, use of knives or dangerous tools unless an adult is present, and positive requirements such as replacing toys after use; handling school property with care and washing hands before meals, lying quietly and not talking or playing at rest time. In such matters as these there should be no question of permitting the child to choose, and it should be taken for granted that he will obey. Requests relating to them must be given calmly and impersonally. They should be requested not "because I say" or "to please me," but because "children may not do this" or "everybody does that here" or "this is the proper use" or "we can't do so and so," etc. The fact that such commands are few in number and are obviously fair and just usually brings a response from children who are very sensible. The child who does not respond must be restrained if necessary. The dangerous article should be taken from him or he should be removed from the source of danger. If a temper-tantrum follows, it is wiser to postpone the discussion until he has recovered his equanimity. Then when peace is restored the reason for the prohibition can be given in some generalized statement such as "Children do not do these things" or "that is only for grown-ups,"

etc. It is better that no emphasis be placed on danger, but consistency is essential. Nothing can be worse for a child than an adult who wavers or who alternates between indulgence and severity. It makes him feel insecure and produces nervousness in various forms.

Apart from matters in which obedience is essential, there are others in which conformity, though desirable is not necessary, and these should not be insisted upon until the child himself recognizes the desirability. Everything to do with courtesy or a co-operative attitude towards others comes into this category. The suggestion should be given in a way that clearly expresses the desirability of the behaviour but which nevertheless leaves the child free to make his own decision. "It would be better to do this, do you not think so?" or "Have you tried doing that," or "I think Tom would like this." Such suggestions give a positive lead to conduct, but are not dogmatic requests.

Ability to obey and work with others even to the extent of denying one's own wishes, represents a level of development and a poised personality not attainable in pre-school years. The elements out of which this power develops are, however, present then and can be strengthened. If strengthened by adult example and training, skilfully employed, the child may in time be able to comprehend and accept the true meaning of discipleship, as Tennyson expresses it in *In Memoriam* :

"Our wills are ours, we know not how,  
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine."

## CHAPTER XIV

### DAILY ROUTINE

DESCRIPTIONS of nursery schools have been so numerous that most people are to-day familiar with the daily occupations. The informality of it all, and the procedure that fills the day are suggestive of the home rather than the school. Children spend most of the day playing freely, with pauses for meals, sleep and visits to the toilet. There are no signals to begin this or end that ; instead there is a gradual transition from one occupation to the next. Children sing as they play—they talk to one another and sometimes wander about looking at things and touching them; the aquarium holds attention for a time, then an electric-light-switch is examined or the turning of taps experimented with.

Yet simple as it is, beneath all must be a plan to keep the day well balanced between activity and rest, and to enable all to work smoothly. The plan of the day and the fixed routine followed should be somewhat similar to the bony skeleton of the body, both as regards the place it occupies and the function it serves. In a well-developed body the bones are well hidden, covered by living tissue that reflects the character of the person, in the way it surrounds and gives beauty to the proportions determined by the bones. The skeleton, too, is well articulated, in order to give flexibility and variety of movement to the body as a whole, as well as to each limb. The same general principle should apply to the daily programme in a nursery school. It should give the shape and proportion necessary, and yet be so supple and unobtrusive that each day becomes an expression of the spirit of the community as a whole. Where there is lack

of planning, not only is all formless and haphazard, but this absence of clear purpose causes a feeling of uncertainty among the staff and insecurity among the children which results in restlessness, and lack of unity. The body of a person who is deficient mentally shows the same want of cohesion and purposefulness. Where, on the other hand, all is planned down to the last half-hour of the day, it is like a body enclosed in steel armour which both restrains and hides the life within, so that the day becomes a mechanism, rather than a living organism expressing the changing needs of the community. One of the many disadvantages of an over-planned regime is that routine tends to become an end in itself and to dominate the situation. Machinery must always be kept in its proper place and treated as a tool that, by relieving man of mechanical drudgery, frees him for a more creative and vital expenditure of energy. The daily programme in the nursery school should leave the teacher free to give her time to be with the children, watching, helping, guiding them and ringing such changes in procedure as may become necessary. Her days should never degenerate into a round of getting things done to time !

#### THE NEED OF FLEXIBILITY

The main characteristics of the programme should be the few fixtures that never vary in time or practice ; general flexibility, and a balanced day of activity and rest. A readiness to modify procedure is necessary both to keep the school living and to prevent the establishment of a standardized day in nursery education as a whole. Any attempt to fix routine while the movement is growing would be equivalent to arresting it at an infantile stage. Unfortunately tendencies towards standardizing procedure are already appearing, even though different nursery schools and classes serve such different purposes when conducted in slum, in re-conditioned areas, new

housing estates, good working class or middle class districts. This is doubly unfortunate, as the nursery school movement is a new bid for sanity in education, and for making the school a living experience to all who are connected with it—teacher, parents, children. If routine and procedure are standardized and features once necessary are maintained after their usefulness has passed, or are introduced merely because they are used in other nursery schools and classes, the result will be the building of yet another cage in which the spirit of education will once again beat its wings in captivity before dying in despair. All hope of experiment or of genuine research would in that event be stillborn.

#### HANDWASHING

One of the features essential in some districts and in others where the school is newly opened and parents and children are still untrained, is handwashing and hair-brushing as the *first* duty of the day. But this and other aspects of hygiene are in danger of being made into a "stunt." Training in personal hygiene is a necessary part of early education, and in schools situated in districts where this is little appreciated or practised, a "clean up" is obviously indispensable before the child mixes with other children, or uses any school toys or apparatus. This is not, however, true of all districts and should not be true of any, when the nursery school is well established and the superintendent and mothers have become friends. Children should arrive with clean hands and faces and tidy hair, as is the custom in most schools. Yet handwashing and hair-tidying are frequently the first occupation expected of the children before going to play for which they are so eager, even when they show their clean hands with pride having been washed at home a few minutes earlier. Education should not train the children to follow routine, but to adapt themselves



intelligently to the needs of every situation, and this "stunt" of handwashing for all, is an insult to the intelligence of the child and is likely to discourage mothers from discharging their own responsibility. If this were the only occasion for training children to take an interest in cleanliness and become skilful in achieving it, the routine would have some justification. But as children must of necessity wash and tidy before meals, there is then always an opportunity for teaching them to do so properly, without maintaining a routine that mothers frequently regard as a reflection on their standard.

#### MORNING RING VERSUS FREE BEGINNING OF DAY

Another routine is the morning ring which is often used to commence the day's activities and introduce the free play period. It is a carry-over from the Froebel tradition whose main disadvantage is that it makes the children wait for school to commence, instead of getting busy on their own initiative the moment they arrive. When children are permitted to play about while waiting, either with or without toys, such play is abruptly interrupted when the hour for the ring strikes. There is, however, no reason why the day should begin with a collective period, and many why it should not do so. Children arrive eager for play, sometimes with very definite plans for it, and should be permitted to settle down as soon as possible. Play is their real education, and habits of industry are not acquired when there are periods of doing nothing but waiting. The early morning is a time of day when, more than at any other hour, children's needs are widely different. Healthy, vigorous children, those who have had good sleep in airy rooms, and proper breakfast are, as a rule, full of energy. Those who have been early awake, and possibly up and dressed, because of the general busyness in the home as each member of the family is got off to work, are apt to feel less vigorous in

mind and body. And the same is true of those who have had insufficient or restless sleep in crowded or stuffy rooms, or who have been hustled or upset in dressing and getting to school on time. Children often require time also to recover from the emotional stress aroused by nightmares common at this age. They play these feelings away if left alone.

When the teacher prefers to keep to the old custom of the morning ring to begin the day using it as a time for collective greeting, for hearing one another's news, singing hymns, saying "Thank you," etc., special activities that come to a natural end can be reserved to precede it—such as preparing the playroom—polishing door knobs, filling up flower vases, dusting, arranging toys, or the feeding and watering of pets, etc. It is unfortunate, however, if free play is long delayed.

An observant teacher will note how differently each child begins his day's play, and when he is free to follow his natural impulse throughout, to alternate strenuous work with times of pause. Some children choose difficult or strenuous pursuits first, and end their morning with restful activities. Others reverse the order, and sometimes begin the day by doing nothing and work up to their high peak. Stanley, a highly nervous child of four who was emotionally disturbed by quarrelling between his parents, usually did nothing for the first fifteen minutes or longer. Then he would as a rule choose an occupation that necessitated the exercise of considerable control, such as piling blocks into a tower and trying to carry them without upsetting the balance. If unsuccessful at first, he would persist until he succeeded, after which he would turn to other kinds of play. Many adults feel the value of beginning the day with a quiet time for self-collection that makes for inner peace and gives an opportunity to gather power for the day's requirements. Was Stanley intuitively having his quiet

time in order to harmonize himself and create a stillness among the warring elements within him? Throughout the day every child moves to a rhythm peculiar to his own needs and temperament. It is instructive to observe the succession of activities chosen and the amount of effort used, and to note the way in which a child balances his day between activity and rest, occasionally lying down to work, or rolling and kicking to restore the elasticity of the body after much standing or sitting at play. Sometimes in visiting a school one is surprised to see a child playing with toys that are usually the choice of younger children, or engaged in some occupation in which mechanical repetition alone is involved, such as peg board or bead threading. If one continues to watch it frequently becomes evident that this babyish occupation is a rest period either before or after a more exacting one, and that the child had probably resorted to it for much the same reason as a woman takes up her knitting, while things sort themselves out in her mind.

These naturally different rhythms, and in particular the varied type of play with which children begin the day, make it desirable to have the whole day as informal and unstercotyped as possible.

#### COLLECTIVE PERIODS.

Organized play in which the teacher controls and directs affairs has its place in the nursery school day but it should be a small one. It is of value in giving children a rest from self-initiated pursuits, and affords experience of doing things together that is stimulating to social development. On the other hand such play makes demands on the children, requiring them to fix their attention, to obey directions, sit still and wait for their companions. This, though good up to a point, causes strain if the periods are lengthy ones. For two-year-olds a very few minutes of organized play is enough, and for

most children under five it should not last longer than fifteen to twenty minutes.

If there is real flexibility, the time and nature of the collective period will vary from day to day and at different seasons. On days when children are absorbed and happy in their own individual play it is unwise to break it, in order to have a collective period at a regular hour. It can always be introduced later, when the play comes to a natural end for a meal or other fixture. On some days it will be a very short period—perhaps two or three minutes—on other days it may be necessary for the teacher to be leader and instigator of activities. There are periods in every community when a spirit of unrest is abroad, when children do not settle happily to their play, but are easily upset and quarrelsome, or excited and boisterous, interrupting and interfering with one another. Occasionally these group moods are caused by the teacher herself who, though she may think she has left “the blues” outside, or is successfully suppressing her anxiety over some personal problem, is really a centre from which unrest spreads. Days of restlessness may on the contrary come from one or two lively spirits who dominate the situation.

When children appear to be growing weary of their free play or show signs of restlessness it is advisable to introduce some organized play in which they can look on the teacher as leader. Such play may involve the whole group or only a small section of it. The occupations most suitable for collective periods are music in the form of singing, rhythmic movement or percussion band, games, stories or nature talks. *Music* should feature largely in the daily programme and there should be a good musician on the staff of every nursery school. Children delight in music and should have ample opportunity for singing, dancing and rhythmical movement which has a harmonizing effect. Many

instruments belonging to a percussion band are available and even little children can use drums, clappers, cymbals, bells and tambourines. In addition to the favourite nursery rhymes, suggestions for suitable songs are contained in the bibliography. They should always be brief and deal with subjects familiar to children in a simple melody covering a not too wide scale without difficult intervals. Songs that involve action or finger play are always enjoyed.

*Games* should provide activity for all as well as turns for many, and should go with a swing. In reality it is games—not lessons—that give children genuine pleasure, especially those that provoke laughter. Games, and in fact all organized periods, should be free from that tedious “waiting” to get ready with “toes on the line” that rob them of their joyousness. When collective periods are dull or too long children find their own way of escape, either by little games of their own which interrupt the general one, or by indulging in undesirable habits and day-dreaming.

*Stories:* There are no good collections of stories for very young children. Such stories, however, exist, sometimes in collections of general tales and teachers are advised to make their own anthologies. The subject matter should be concerned with familiar everyday situations—people, animals, shopping expeditions, parties, etc. Reference has been made elsewhere to the value of stories in the building of a vocabulary. The right choice of words and good phrasing are in fact as important as the subject. In this connection interesting researches have been carried out and in the Report, the most popular stories are quoted in full.<sup>1</sup> Some of them are excellent in every respect—subject, language and arrangement. The story of the bunnies’ tea party is one that every two-year-old will love and is an admirable illustration of the type of story suitable.

<sup>1</sup> Research of Mrs. Georgia Conant in *Studies in Pre-School Education*, published by the University of Iowa, 1938.

The change from free play to a collective period should be a transition rather than a sudden change. For example, when the teacher sees that the time has come to bring the individual play period to an end, she can begin to play the piano and sing, not as a signal but as a suggestion. Soon the children will put away their toys and gather around and a collective sing-song ensue. Or she can say "Do you want to go on playing alone, or shall we all play together?" or "Shall I tell you a story or would you like to dance?" Yet it should never be necessary for all children to cease play at the same moment. Those who prefer to remain at individual play should be free to do so.

#### ROUTINE VISITS TO THE LAVATORY

When children first enter the nursery school, if they have not been trained to regularity or control, they and all two-year-olds should be taken to the lavatory at regular intervals. Because of the general dislocation that this causes—for the teacher should be there to train the children in the proper use of the lavatory, pulling of chain, and in self help—it is usually best for the group to go together. As soon as possible, however, this should be replaced by more individual treatment. Each child's natural elimination period should be noted, and after it is no longer necessary for him to be taken to the toilet, he should be reminded to go at regular intervals. Without causing strain, the length of time between visits should be gradually increased. After a time the child should be able to assume full responsibility in this matter, and go out when he needs to. This avoids the necessity of regimenting children and interrupting the work of all at regular periods. It also throws more responsibility on to the children and teaches them to think and plan for themselves. The helper, who should be instructed in the essential duties and appropriate attitude towards

them, or the teacher herself, should go off with any child who still needs help, and should also visit the lavatories from time to time to see that all is being properly kept. In a school with a large staff, it should be possible for all to take short periods of lavatory duty throughout the day, and be there to help any child who needs it.

### ESSENTIAL FEATURE

There are several fixtures that should be unvarying, centres round which the day takes shape. These are: general inspection—for each child should be looked over on arrival—play, meals, sleep, toilet. The times of the meals and sleep should be fixed, and also the toilet visit that precedes and succeeds them, for such regularity is essential to good health. Playtime is more or less fixed, though as has been shown it can vary in nature and in length. This simple routine is that of living, not of schooling. The nursery school is an extension of the home life to which the child is accustomed, yet from the simplicity of its home-like fixtures it prepares the child and carries him naturally towards the wider experience that school life brings. The more home-like it can be made by the informality of its routine, the better. The daily time table works out somewhat as follows:

- 8.30 to 9 until 11.30 approx. Arrival, individual greeting and inspection of children—change to school garments, wash, tidy, use handkerchief (if necessary), have fruit juice, milk or drink of water. Play—no fixed time for individuals playing out of doors or in rooms as directed by their interests.
- 11.30 to 12. Putting away toys and getting ready for lunch. Those taking part in setting tables could leave their play earlier.
- 12 to 12.45. Lunch, followed by visit to lavatory.
- 1 to 2.30. Sleep.

- 2.30 to 3.15 (as children wake one by one). Fold blankets, visit lavatory, have drink of water and play.  
 3.15. Prepare for tea—after which change garments and get ready for home.

This time schedule for a whole day nursery school is also suitable in general principle for a nursery class, though some modification of the afternoon programme will be necessary if children do not remain for a midday meal and cannot get to bed at 1 o'clock as is desirable.

This arrangement divides the time available somewhat as follows :

- Play. About 3 hours (a.m.  $1\frac{1}{2}$ —2 hours, p.m. 1— $1\frac{1}{2}$  hrs.)  
 Meals. About  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours. (Early milk or fruit juice—15 minutes. Midday meal—45 minutes. Tea—30 minutes.)  
 Rest.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours plus 15—20 minutes before lunch for 2—3-year-olds, if necessary.  
 Toilet. 1 hour.  
 Group activities—stories—percussion band—sing-song, games—approx. 20 minutes.

The largest amount of time possible should be allowed for play ; play periods themselves should be long enough to ensure children becoming really absorbed in their pursuits. If they do not habitually do so, but instead play for only ten or twenty minutes between adult controlled activities, they do not develop the power of sustained attention or concentration. As a consequence, as they grow in body they remain infantile in mind and on entering the primary school are at a loss and unable to work thoughtfully.

A work atmosphere helps to encourage concentration and in the occupation period children should be expected when moving about and talking to one another to do so without unnecessary noise.

It is not specifically stated how much of the play period is to be spent in outdoor or indoor occupations, as it seems most natural for children to play where, and as they choose, passing from outdoor to indoor pursuits as their



play needs determine, and the school should be equipped to encourage play in the open air. It is artificial to have certain periods only for running about in the open air, and unreasonable only to provide for vigorous physical activity there. Children do not want only to run about out of doors. Such behaviour may satisfy puppies, but not children who want to do things and be purposeful in all their activities, and who are capable of establishing for themselves a balanced day of activity and rest. It is true that they do not always balance their day well when they first come to the nursery school. It is all so exciting, and there are so many new things to do, that they sometimes get over-stimulated and overtired. This danger must be guarded against and children who run about too actively or for long periods and get over-heated should be headed off to other pursuits. This restlessness does not as a rule last long. It is a symptom of psychic hunger, and disappears normally when the child's daily life and opportunities are satisfying to him.

The outdoors should be as stimulating to all kinds of play as the playrooms, so as to enable the child to spend the bulk of the day there, when weather permits. Several things are essential to make this possible. The staff must be so organized as to have some teachers and helpers always out-of-doors and others in the shelters. There must be out-of-doors furniture, hardwood tables and something to sit on, both seats and waterproof ground sheets. Sheds, in which toys can be kept, are needed as well as places to play, and there should be suitable clothing to keep children warm. In summer the clothing question does not arise. In winter, it can be solved by the provision of suits like ski-suits, made of warm material that fit closely round ankles and neck with elastic and suitable damp-proof shoes. Such garments are habitually worn in American and are in use in some schools here. If they were provided in them all, children could habitually spend the bulk of the day out of doors in winter as well as in summer as they should do.

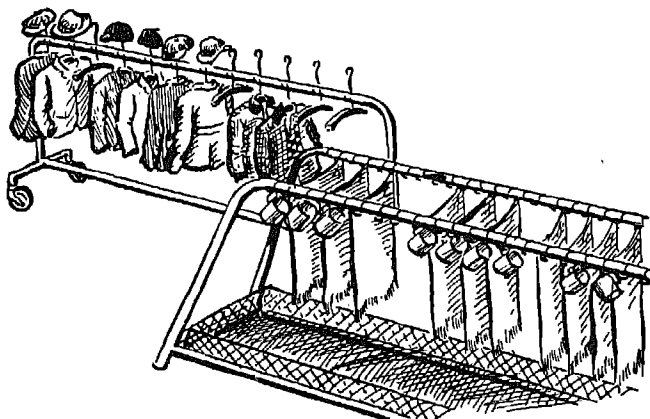
### PREPARING FOR MEALS

In nursery schools where there is a midday meal and possibly tea, it seems inadvisable to take time for setting tables for the early morning milk or fruit juice. Children can fetch the bottle of milk and a straw and consume it while sitting watching others at play or it can be a buffet meal. When there is no midday meal, more of a feature should be made of the mid-morning meal. Tables should be set, by the children, with dainty cloths, plates for rusks and a vase of flowers. Good habits of eating and drinking, and the social training involved in nursery meals are important. In addition to regular meals and milk, there should be stated times for water drinking, in order that this good habit may be built up early. First thing in the morning and after sleep in the afternoon are both suitable times. If milk is served on arrival the water drinking can come later but it should be some time before the midday meal. The time appointed for milk-drinking is equally important. If the child has had a solid breakfast before coming to school milk should not be given before 10 o'clock. Otherwise digestion will be delayed. Unnecessary sitting waiting for meals should be avoided. It is better not to call children to table until the meal is ready to be served. Then a minute or two of stillness is all to the good and provides an opportunity for the "thank you," where this is said or sung. If there are plenty of waiters and servers, food is quickly brought to the children, and the meal is not unnecessarily prolonged. The use of forks as well as spoons is advisable for those over three, and pushers for younger ones. Feeders, though necessary for the two-year-olds, should be scorned by those of three and over, who should by then have learned to eat without messing themselves.

### TIME FOR CHILDREN TO PLAY THEIR PART IN ROUTINE

One of the advantages of a flexible time table, is the

opportunity it gives children to join in and play their part in all procedure; setting tables, washing and dressing themselves, folding blankets, and clearing up after their play. Where the day is planned in half-hour segments there is no time for this, as there is a constant feeling of rush on the part of the staff to get all done to schedule



Movable Apparatus used in Bolton

time. The nursery school has been well described by Miss Grace Owen as a way of life that is educative at every moment and place. It is so only if children are actively entering into all that happens there. This they cannot do adequately, if hurried and flurried, as they do not normally move quickly and fail to develop skill while trying to do so. When brushes are whisked out of slow fumbling hands by harassed helpers, and combs, towels and blankets are dealt with by adults at top speed, children fall back into infantile habits of being "done for." Education arising from experience of living thus becomes impossible and the nursery school ceases to be a place of education and is reduced to one for minding

children. Under these circumstances the value of it is very much diminished, not only for the children, but also for their parents who learn more about the way to train them by watching the self-help expected in the nursery school, than in any other way. Moreover, the need of a specially trained staff cannot be justified, where all is done for the children. Then any sensible woman could fill the post. Where, on the other hand, every occupation is an education in itself, in manual dexterity, self-reliance and in social helpfulness, children learn to live by living and the appointment of a suitably qualified staff is indispensable. It cannot be stressed too often that the child's best education is provided by adjusting himself intelligently to the demands of every-day happenings and exercising foresight and initiative in dealing with them.

#### BADLY-PLANNED BUILDINGS HINDER EDUCATION

The desire to keep the day free from too great a number of set proceedings is rendered difficult when the building is either badly planned or congested, and garden space is not conveniently accessible. When many children have the use of only one room as playroom, dining-room, and sleeping-room, and where in addition a bathroom has to be shared with another group, it is extremely difficult to avoid set routine. When the weather is wet, or for any reason children cannot be out-of-doors, the problem of adapting a room full of children to a succession of uses is not an easy task. Once tables are arranged for lunch—or beds for sleep—there is no room for children to play, or to share in the arrangements. The teacher is confronted with a situation which tempts her to resort to arrangements that she knows to be of little or no value. Children are sometimes required to sit doing nothing while things are prepared for them. Sometimes they are given picture books, but having no tables on which to rest them, these

are not very easy to manage and are seldom a success. Picture books are too frequently used as stop gaps or as "comforters" to keep children quiet. It seems unfortunate that the child's first acquaintance with books should be associated with times of uncomfortable and tedious waiting, instead of delight.

It is not possible to give any precise advice as to the solving of these problems, which can only be dealt with satisfactorily on the spot. Where there is a spare room or hall or verandah as an overflow for children—or better still, where each room has a sleeping porch attached—which means two rooms for each group, these problems do not arise. Nursery classes in which children have to wash as well as eat, sleep and play, present even greater problems, though in most infant schools the big hall can be used as a play-place while rooms are converted. Someone has likened such unsatisfactory accommodation to one-room homes that are condemned by all. Nevertheless, resourceful teachers have triumphed over such difficulties. By means of such inventions as a double shelf—the top one used for play with small toys, or vases of flowers; the under one for storing basins, with towels hung beneath; or by screening off a "bathroom" corner, these "one-room schools" have often provided good training in skill and orderliness.

#### ARRANGING THE PLAYROOM

Rooms should be planned and arranged with care. They have a three-fold purpose, being places that generate purposeful activities and an educative way of life, that are aesthetically stimulating and that provide space and inspiration for many kinds of play. The usual rectangular room with its high walls and wide expanse of floor is not the sort of place that children would naturally choose for play. When free to do so, they invariably go to passages, cloakrooms, under the teacher's table and to

corners made by partitioning off a section of the room with furniture or anything else available. In the Haus der Kinder in Vienna the rooms were interesting in shape



A Blanket Store and Play Shelf combined in a Leeds Nursery Class and the walls were broken by deep recesses and bays, each one of which was a centre for a specific kind of play. The play material was so attractively set out in

each place that the room gave the appearance of a well-planned garden, in which the children were as bees as they busied themselves first in one place then in another, seeking nourishment and delight. In another nursery school in the same city the furniture was specially designed so that it could be used for screening off corners and making play places. With a little ingenuity an ordinary playroom can be made more child-like by the provision of small collapsible clothes-horse screens covered appropriately, or the piano and cupboards so arranged as to provide playing places behind them. In this way special corners can be made for different activities. All the dolls, for instance, can be kept in one corner with filing cabinets for dolls' clothes, and furniture, prams and other accessories of doll-play. Another place might be the library with suitably constructed display shelves for books, dainty tables and comfortable chairs at which to use them. Waterplay or clay (if not provided for out of doors) can inhabit another corner with ground sheet on floor, and with the other materials useful for such play stored conveniently at hand.

If toys are sensibly classified and arranged in an orderly manner, wherever they are kept, and if dusters, brushes and pans, polishers, mops and all cleaning materials are also kept conveniently placed, and are in themselves attractive, children will form the habit of taking charge of their room and be constantly arranging and re-arranging, sorting and fixing. The furniture should be lightly constructed, not only to enable children to carry it about, but also to reveal every rough and clumsy gesture by being easily overturned. Montessori shows in the arrangement of her rooms how excellently furniture can be didactic and the means of training children to move gracefully. Her schools demonstrate that breakable cups and plates are more educative than those of an

unbreakable nature which can be dropped and knocked without the child becoming aware of his unskilfulness. Once, in lecturing, Montessori likened heavy, unbreakable equipment to the wiles of the devil that keep man unaware of his mistakes until he is so deeply involved that there is no escape for him !

The playroom can be made aesthetically stimulating in many ways and thus provide opportunity for the use of sensory discrimination that well-chosen apparatus should develop. Material for curtains, table-cloths, staff-smocks and overalls can be attractive in colour, pattern and texture. There are many dainty checked and striped materials that make very attractive table-cloths. Vases can be good in colour and shape and sufficient in number for children to choose them discriminately when arranging flowers. Large bowls for flowers provide good patches of colour, but children are equally delighted with the single bloom in a tiny vase—a daisy from the lawn—one sprig of speedwell or forget-me-not, clover and grass or a pansy. The beauty of each flower is fully appreciated when allowed to stand alone. In all probability children learn to love flowers more when they are so arranged than when they are massed in big vases. Many proprietary articles are now sold in very small glass or china receptacles which can be suitably converted by a coat of dull-finished enamel. Fawns and pastel shades are generally better for this purpose than bright colours which do not make good backgrounds for flowers. It is useful also for children to know and enjoy these delicate shades as well as the primary colours ; they usually delight in them as much as in the tiny pots. Children can also learn to make their own pots in clay and these can be coloured after baking.

In one school known to the writer colour was introduced by the novel method of framing pieces of material of a beautiful tone and texture which were changed



repeatedly. Children watched with interest for the next colour and for the pleasure of matching things with it and in this way developed a strong colour sense. The same principle can be applied to pictures. Frames can be procured with adjustable backs so that a succession of pictures can be exhibited. This is better than a simultaneous display which is never changed.

Needless to say all furnishings, table-cloths, floors and everything used by or surrounding children should be kept scrupulously clean for aesthetic as well as for hygienic reasons. As children play much on the floor a supply of movable mats should be available. They take added care when the things they use are pretty, such as table-cloths, but when these get dirty or stained they become careless in table manners. For two-year-olds who are at the stage of learning to manage spoons, it is preferable to use material for cloths that can be sponged daily, and there are many quite attractive stuffs of this nature such as lancaster cloth. In addition to their aesthetic value, all these details of arrangement provide excellent opportunities for training in dexterity, good habits and a sense of order, to which children respond readily as the experiences have a meaning and a purpose that they can appreciate.

## CHAPTER XV

### GROUPING THE CHILDREN

#### THE TWO-YEAR-OLD

THE routine in the previous chapter, though suitable in a general way for children of three and over, does not meet the needs of the two-year-olds, for whom special provision must be made. At two the child is just emerging from babyhood and is in the stage of gaining control and getting firmly on his feet, physically and psychologically. In order to achieve this, experiment is necessary. The child is very active physically, climbing, jumping, balancing, and using his body in a great variety of ways. He is equally busy examining, investigating, poking fingers into everything and discovering all he can about things and people. As has been already explained, the impulse for free, independent, self-reliant activity, that rises so strongly, is accompanied by intense emotional dependence. The child is more loving and demanding of love than he has previously been and is particularly devoted to the adult with whom he has been most closely associated—mother, nurse, or teacher—and feels forsaken when separated from them. It is therefore a bad age to change nurses, and for the same reason, there are many who believe it to be an unsuitable age for the child to make his first attendance at the nursery school and be separated from his mother. When this happens, some fear that psychological violence is done to the child, though in the many homes in which separation occurs because the mother is breadwinner this criticism does not apply.

## THE NURSERY SCHOOL CAN HELP

It is generally considered advisable for the two-year-old to spend a shorter day in the nursery school than is customary for older ones, provided his mother is at home and is able to care for him. There is little doubt that for many, if not the majority of two-year-olds, the nursery school can meet the needs of the difficult transition period from babyhood to childhood more satisfactorily than the average home is able to do, provided, of course, that the two-year-old group is small and other conditions referred to later are observed. It is built round the child, being in very truth a children's land wherein opportunities are arranged that give an appropriate outlet for the exercise of both physical and psychological impulses that arise so insistently at this age. In the family it usually happens that either the child's impulses have to be suppressed in the interests of adult convenience and the child's own safety, or the adult world revolves round the child making him too much the centre and dominating all by his charm—or "naughtiness." To be too much with adults in an adult setting is disadvantageous, for the child receives over-much notice in the form of either encouragement or discouragement. In the nursery school this does not happen. All is safe and suitable, and with a background of adult security, of which the child is fully conscious, he is left very much to his own pursuits and is never the centre of the scene. He can be as active physically as his body is urging him to be, handling, examining and carrying things about, and can find satisfaction for his eager intelligence without running any risk of harm. The number of situations in which he has to conform to adult wishes being relatively small, temper-tantrums, fits of obstinacy and rebellion are seldom aroused and the child is able to use all his natural assertiveness in gaining mastery of his world. It is by this

means that wilfulness grows into will power instead of finding expression in aggressive unsocial behaviour.

#### SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS. ENTERING THE SCHOOL

The nursery school can be of service to the two-year-old if special conditions are observed. The child takes a very big step when he leaves the intimacy of his small home inhabited by those he has learned to love and rely upon, and goes among strangers in a strange place. Everything is new—the building is unlike home, and he does not know his way about; the adults are unfamiliar, the other children are many in number as well as unknown. The shock of being suddenly and unexpectedly separated from home and mother can be very real and give the child a feeling of being forsaken. A day can seem like eternity, for the little child has no time sense and accepts things as for ever and ever. The pitiful, hopeless crying of a newly arrived two-year-old sometimes heard is an indication of the unhappiness and fear that some of them experience. In order to save him from this shock, arrangements should be made, wherever possible, for a gradual entry. He should have time to become acquainted with the building, the things that happen in it and the people with whom he is to be associated before being left for the whole day. The first step can take the form of a visit, or several visits with mother, or some well-known adult, during which they can sit and watch other children at play, and “look round” the cupboards, bathroom, the lavatory, kitchen, etc. Following that, the child can be left for a short spell—perhaps the play period only—and go home again at its conclusion. Then dinner-time can be included, by which time the child should be ready to face the full plunge, which he then takes with eagerness, as his interest is already awake. He feels safe, among friends; he has also learned his way

home on the many visits and as a rule settles down contentedly. Many a child who remains happy during play-time, becomes tearful at dinner-time and even more so at sleep-time. Meals and bedtime are so closely associated with home and mother that the plea "want me mum" is frequently heard. Sitting beside and having a bed near some known older child or in close proximity to a loving adult often comforts the child, and the presence of outdoor clothes on a nearby chair "all ready to go home after bedtime" is reassuring. Parting with outdoor clothes is often an occasion for tears. It seems like severing the last link with the known and familiar. Where children are really anxious, it is often advisable to let them keep their hats and coats on until they begin to feel at home. They soon discard these hampering garments themselves as they settle down.

#### THE TEACHER AND SIZE OF THE GROUP

The teacher of the two-year-olds should be carefully selected, for hers is the all-important role of mother substitute, someone to whom the child can turn in full assurance of love and protection. Unhurried in her movements, she should also be serene, patient, gentle and affectionate by nature. It is inadvisable for these little ones to be put in charge of the helper. They need individual care and training, for it is at this age that they must learn to use the lavatory, blow their noses, eat with spoons and become proficient in the various duties with which the day is filled. The teaching must be given day after day with patience and understanding, and every child encouraged to feel a growing sense of power and achievement. If habits of self-help in regard to personal hygiene are acquired at this age, the following years in the nursery school will provide possibilities for the child to pursue other and more developed activities. If, on the other hand, the little child has too much done for him, and

does not acquire good habits and skill, this deficiency will hamper him in successive years. Their need of individual lessons makes it also necessary to have the group into which they enter small, so that each child can have the guidance he requires. A group of six or eight children at most is essential for this and other reasons. Few two-year-olds have been associated with other children except their own brothers and sisters, and the initiation into a world of children will be less frightening and more successful if the number with whom they are first associated is limited. Apart from their dislike of having to share the adult with many others—which often arouses hostility at this age—children have not yet learned to adjust themselves to other children. They do not find it easy to do so at first, because, though attracted to children, they are inclined to relegate them to the category of “things” rather than people, and to try to dominate and use them for their own needs. This behaviour is consistent with the egocentricity of the two-year-old, and it is the cause of scraps and slaps between them. They learn to see the others’ point of view and to accommodate themselves to it more satisfactorily by beginning in a group, small enough for them to get to know one another intimately, as individual people. Where there is a crowd the personal element is less apparent and progress in social adjustment is slower, and sometimes unhappiness is experienced. A small group also simplifies the toy supply. Children of this age have not learned to share and quarrelling for the possession of toys is apt to occur unless there are enough of the popular ones for all. Waiting or sharing, forced upon very young children by insufficiency of toys, engenders an unfriendly attitude and retards the growth of the desire to share that should be established by about the age of four. Lack of physical control often causes falls and bumps which may not be only painful but also cause a feeling of inferiority.

Such tumbles are more frequent when groups are large. It is important for children to be really in command of themselves and able to run without falling before they join a group. Otherwise, the inadequacy they are certain to experience, tends to encourage individual play instead of social adventure. For this reason the two-year-olds should not as a rule use the garden at the same time as older children who often become very boisterous out of doors, and rightly so, and this has an alarming effect. Given a carefully guarded and happy beginning the two-year-old is able in a very few weeks to join with others and enjoy their companionship.

#### THE DAILY RÉGIME FOR TWO-YEAR-OLDS

The day's arrangements should differ in many respects from that suggested for older children. These two-year-olds are less used to taking charge of themselves and need shorter times for free play and more frequent periods with the adult. These periods need not be spent in formal collective play but in simple pursuits such as going for a walk in the garden, looking at pictures or having a little game with her. Their individual play is more successful if the teacher is at hand, and if she sits among them several will bring their toys and play close to her and possibly keep up a stream of conversation as a means of sustaining contact. Their need of more frequent visits to the toilet breaks into individual play and brings them constantly into contact with the teacher. These visits, which afford opportunity for training in self-help and muscular co-ordination, are as educative as any other occupation at this age and should never be hurried.

#### GROUPING CHILDREN

There are different methods of grouping children who can be brought together either on an age basis or in "family" groups. In some nurseries the children of

two, three and four years of age are in separate groups. In others the children under three are in one group and those of three to five in parallel "family" groups. It is generally agreed that for most of the day it is better for those under three to be together in small numbers and the maximum number of fifteen has been specified by the Ministry of Education as the size of their group.<sup>1</sup> This is a great improvement on the arrangements that existed before the war, but it is questionable if the young two-year-old—away from mother for the first time—should be required to share the Nursery School teacher (his mother substitute) with fourteen other clamorous two-year-olds. Perhaps eventually it will be possible to restrict the number to six or eight for these very young children who have special needs that cannot be adequately met where one adult has many of them to care for.

Though the under-threes should have their separate group, it must be remembered that they very much enjoy to be included occasionally in a group of older children for a short time or a special occasion when the activities are such that all can share. A birthday party is such an occasion, or the arrival of a visitor in the form of someone's pussy or dog. Older children also enjoy to play with "the babies" and there should occasionally be an opportunity for them to care for the little ones. These older children "both boys and girls alike, apparently derive considerable pleasure from caressing and helping the babes. They want to kiss, hug and nurse them, and hold their hands. They also ask or elect to take care of them, offering help with their duties, fixing their feeders, etc. The older children seem to feel important and secure in their superior abilities and are drawn towards the little ones who give them the opportunity for favourable comparison and general self-expression. They feel them-

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education Circular 10, par. 6b. (H.M.S.O.)



selves in the envied position of parent and delight in acting accordingly—lifting babes about to the extreme discomfort of the latter. It is the older children who enjoy this, and adults often have to come to the help of the babies being too much mothered and having their liberties interfered with. The older child may be trying to please the baby. He is also getting great pleasure for himself.”<sup>1</sup> Though children gain much by helping one another this must not be overdone. “The attitude of guardian or mentor is as devastating as that of infant or inferior, and older children as well as babies must be protected from a programme that makes demands upon them beyond their capacity for making that experience an integral part of the maturing process.”<sup>2</sup>

There are several advantages in putting children of three to five in mixed groups, apart from the common sense arrangement of grouping them on the basis of normal family living. Where children of various ages are collected, toys and play materials can be more heterogeneous than where all are at the same stage of development. This makes for varied types of play, which creates a more educative environment for the group as a whole. Children see others busy over different occupations, and are stimulated by it. For practical reasons it is also an advantage, in that all the children are not wanting to use the same kind of toy. Their interests are more varied because their stages of development differ. Children rarely completely outgrow any play interest during the nursery school period, and the fours like to revert to old interests and play with toys that they enjoyed at a younger age, though as a rule they use them in a different way. They like, too, to play with younger children at times. Where the children are classified in accordance with age,

<sup>1</sup> K. Bridges : *Op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> H. Johnson : *Children in the Nursery School*. (George Allen & Unwin Ltd.)

babyish toys are not as a rule to be found on the shelves of the four-year-old cupboards. This is unfortunate as children are thus deprived of a real freedom of choice and of play that gives the teacher an opportunity to see a child's emotional and intellectual difficulties by the way he chooses and uses more infantile toys.

Though it is valuable for fives to be able to revert to the play of the two-year-olds, it is not so suitable for the twos to play with five-year-old material, much of which is beyond their power of manipulation. They are not sufficiently mature to understand its real usefulness, and familiarity with it before they can enjoy it spoils its appeal for them at a later age, when, if they meet it for the first time, they are immediately attracted to it. Such toys as matador, pic-a-bric, etc., can be used successfully only by children who have developed a capacity to play purposefully with an idea in mind, and who have acquired a certain amount of manual dexterity. In the hands of the two-year-olds parts are lost and broken and the whole toy rendered useless for everyone else. Thus whereas the toy cupboards of children over three should include play material of all kinds, those of the two-year-olds should be stocked selectively.

Another advantage of the family group is that it protects children from the quite unsuitable practice of being promoted from group to group, and enables them to remain for two or three years with the same group of children and the same teacher. They get very attached to their playmates, their room, and their teacher, and it is possible that a good deal of the restlessness, frequently seen among children in schools in which promoting takes place, is due to the unsettlement that this causes. It may sometimes be an advantage to move a teacher from one group to another, especially if she is finding any child particularly difficult, or to remove the child to another group. Sometimes a child is difficult because of his

individual problems which may need specially skilful handling ; sometimes the difficulty arises from a temperamental clash between the teacher and child of which neither is aware, but which nevertheless raises a barrier between them. A child often ceases to be difficult with a teacher of a different temperament. Nevertheless, changes should be infrequent at this age, and it is a disadvantage for the child to change his room and playmates at the same time as he changes his teacher unless this is inevitable. It is, of course, an advantage for the child to get to know more than one teacher, and in a well-organized school in which the staff's duties are divided for playground, bathroom, lunch and sleep duty, this occurs normally.

Whatever the method of grouping, it is desirable to have interchange between the groups, so that children can develop a sense of belonging to a larger community than their own group. This can be done in many ways. For example, birthday girls and boys can invite friends from other groups to special parties or to play games, or things can be made by one group and presented to another, or toys lent or exchanged. Such interchange between the groups adds zest to life, widening the scope of it. It prevents routine from becoming monotonous while still keeping enough regularity to create a feeling among the children of being at home and safe. Such interchange between groups makes the nursery into one big family.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE GARDEN

ANYONE whose childhood's playground was not a room but a garden and who cherishes vivid memories of happy play surrounded by colour and scent, of wind and sunshine will agree that the chief feature of the nursery school or class should be the garden. She would urge that children be allowed to spend the bulk of the day there whenever weather permits, and find in it such pastimes and playthings as have been the delight of children throughout the ages. Yet those responsible for building and maintaining nursery schools, though often lavish in expenditure on building, furniture and equipment, are, generally speaking, content if the out-of-doors section consists of an expanse of ground, with perhaps a few shrubs or garden beds, a sand-pit and jungle gym. There are of course some notable exceptions where progressive authorities have planned for both nursery classes as well as schools, gardens that are full of joy as well as of spaciousness. The garden is an environment that has considerable influence not only in promoting good health, but also in awakening aesthetic and intelligent interest in living things and in sowing seeds of reverence and wonder. Unfortunately it is not possible to bring the countryside with its peace and healing to the city child—the joy of cowslip balls, daisy chains, bluebell woods, bird-haunted. But much can be done by those who know and love nature to create a garden that will be a source of pleasure and profit. The suggestions below are given with the assurance that the teacher of young children will be a nature student and thus be able to fill in and complete this outline.

## THE GARDEN AS A PLAYGROUND

From a health point of view, no building, however much open, is as valuable as life in the open, close to unpaved earth with its magnetism and vital energy, absorbed so quickly through hands and feet. If children are to be induced to spend the day in the garden, it must become a real play-place full of suggestiveness and enjoyment, and not merely a place to run about in or to air indoor toys for short periods. Carefully planned, the garden can provide play material that is in wholesome contrast to the artificial shop-made toys with which so much of the day is spent—toys made necessary by reason of the divorce from nature that town life brings. Though many firms are now making toys excellently suited to children's interests and developing powers, it is disappointing to find objects purchased that can and should be constructed by children on their own initiative, or by the teachers and children as the need arises. Activity of this kind involving inventiveness and practical ability is educative in the truest sense. Initiative and resourcefulness are given insufficient incentive when ready-made products suitable for one kind of use only are provided in place of suggestive material that can be put to a variety of uses. With a few planks, logs, barrels, boxes, stones and sticks, many playthings can be constructed. Children very much enjoy home-made toys, which they have helped to make, such as see-saws, balancing boards, jumping stands, spring boards, etc.

The garden provides opportunity for storing and using a variety of such material and at the same time produces much itself. It is usually possible to obtain sticks and stones, leaves, acorns, conkers, and beech-nuts. There is generally someone connected with, or interested in, the school who makes periodical visits to the country and the sea—who can be commissioned to bring supplies. It is

frequently possible also for country schools to undertake to send these objects to town schools. Children put them to a variety of uses, loading waggons with them, decorating sand castles, etc. Large heavy logs can be clambered upon and used as buses, trains, aeroplanes; smaller ones can be rolled about or carried by groups formed spontaneously for the task and enjoying the co-operative effort. Logs also make good seats and tables to play upon.

The garden becomes interesting for play when, in addition to ample space for free running, it includes places for hiding and for getting into, such as shrubberies, sheds or playhouses. Playhouses should be small, about four feet high with door and windows, and inside a table and a bench to serve as seat or playing place. If creepers are trained over it—such as quick-growing polygnum or honeysuckle—this helps to make it secret and private, full of spiders and caterpillars which delight children, though not adults who consequently do not intrude. Thus they become real children's places. Other secret corners can be made by erecting fences or garden screens covered with creeper. Winding paths with smooth surfaces along which carts, prams or bicycles can be steered are also much appreciated. These can wind round flower beds, or wooden tubs of growing plants where these are used to beautify and break up a dull asphalt playground. A grass bank for clambering up and rolling down—both excellent forms of exercise—a sunk garden or pit with steps to go up and down, also add to the garden's charm. Perhaps as useful as anything is a scrap heap. No child will play in a tidy garden if he has access to a rubbish heap, and in every garden big enough the teacher should contrive to have an odds-and-ends corner. It can include boards and planks, large and small stones, lumps of concrete, builders' bricks and tiles, wooden paving blocks, barrels, drums or other

rolling objects, ropes, boxes or any "fillable" receptacle and waste material of all kinds that is free from splinters, nails, breakable glass or rusting tin.

Benches and tables are necessary for children to play upon and stepping stones provide good exercise in balancing. A tree to climb is, of course, a great delight and more interesting than a jungle gym or ribstall. Most nursery schools are too young to have grown trees, but, it is hoped that suitable quick growers are being planted for the future, such as chestnut, lovely at all times of year. Trees, in addition to being good for climbing make a centre round which play can gather, attract birds, give shade and provide much play material—autumn leaves, twigs, bits of bark, etc. Incidentally a tree demonstrates the rhythm of the seasons very dramatically when, after standing stark for months, buds and then a shower of leaves come, passing through various shades of green to the rich and beautiful brown of autumn.

Grass is so lovely to roll on that one cannot imagine a garden without its green carpet, but a paved surface well-drained is indispensable in winter when the grass is sodden with rain. A paddling pool is also a delight and quite healthy if the water is frequently changed through a properly constructed outlet and no child with sores on hands and feet is allowed to enter it. A shallow portable pool can be installed at not very great expense.

The garden is the proper place for pets, the care of which brings so valuable a lesson. Bantam cock and hen which can bring up their chicks, tortoise, puppy, hedgehog, and if the run be large enough and suitable arrangements for week-end and holidays can be made—bunnies, guinea pigs and white mice. Pigeons, flying free, can be kept fairly easily and become very tame, coming to the child's hand for food, and every effort should be made to attract birds by hanging up strings of nuts and scattering breadcrumbs.

## THE GARDEN A SOURCE OF SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

If children really live in the garden at a time when their perceptions are very keen, they notice and make friends with the many interesting things and creatures that inhabit it. They learn to recognize the different sounds made by wind as it blows through trees and bushes. They note the way in which the different flowers receive its caress—the campanula by ringing its bells, the coreopsis bowing and swaying gaily on its slender stalk, the snap-dragon prim and unbending, except for a trembling of its leaves. They also become sky-conscious, interested in clouds, the lights that come and go and the shadows on the ground. They investigate and learn to distinguish the different texture of leaves and their surfaces—the cool juicy leaves of the sedums, hairy tough comfrey, smooth nasturtium, rough sunflower. For scent they have also a keen appreciation—nepeta, marigold, snap-dragon, burgamot, as well as herbs that should always find a place, sage, thyme, mint, and parsley. In French nursery schools herb gardens are usually included and are known as *jardins d'expérience*. Children quickly notice the varied shapes of flowers and leaves, the needle-like broom, star-shaped lupins, spear-like iris, ferny pyrethrums. They are all a source of delight to the little ones, who like to find as many different kinds as they can and in doing so become at home with a great variety of plants.

Children also never weary of watching the forming buds and opening flowers and enjoy popping the seed-pods to see the neat and beautiful way in which next year's seeds are packed. A marrow with its mother and father flowers and its case full of seeds is among the many plants that can be grown. The seeds can be dried and put away "till next year" and then set in pots from which the plants can be transplanted. Though the children will probably not remember from season to



season, if this and other similar proceedings are done each year they will begin to be aware of the regularity of nature's ways.

All children love small things and few flowers give so much pleasure as rock plants. A rock garden can be easily set up even on asphalt and inexpensively stocked. By raising plants above ground level children can look right into the tiny bells of the dwarf campanula and on the faces of heartsease and rock-roses. A rock garden also provides good picking for indoors. Aubretia, lobelia, arabis are all hardy growers and have a long flowering season. One sprig of each in a tiny vase will give pleasure. A child dearly loves to be promoted to cutting these dainty stalks and arranging them, and it affords good opportunity for training in care and love of living things and of not cutting or collecting more than can be used.

A wild garden is also desirable and even a few yards in an odd corner can be turned into a place of beauty and surprises with tall flowering grasses, clover, celandine, dandelions, bulbs, primroses and bluebells. It can be planted on the banks of a sunken pond for goldfish. This, well fenced to accord safety to children and to plants, can become a favourite spot to look down into—but not to enter.

Children make friends with the many useful and interesting creatures that inhabit the garden, ants busy in the grass, worms and woolly bears—"worms with fur coats on," as one child called them—snails, bees, spiders, moths, and soon discover the kind of plants different creatures favour. They talk much about these things, asking why, when and how, and thus build up a rich store of memories that serves as a basis for aesthetic and intellectual creativity. Nature tables supplemented by nature talks help to quicken interest and give added insight, partly because in this way things can be observed

more minutely and partly because each is isolated from the multitude of other stimuli that the garden provides. A magnifying glass (reading lens) on the aquarium table is useful for closer observation, but for practical reasons it is advisable to keep this tied to the table. To children a glass prism that reflects bands of coloured light is an alluring mystery.

Though children do not consciously notice the changes that come over the garden as the year advances they are subconsciously aware of them and in time learn to recognize the rhythm of the seasons and the way in which nature is always preparing for what is to come. They see her care for the future, not only in her exquisite methods of packing seeds, but also in her leaf-bud forming and other preparations that precede the winter sleep. Planning, preparing, safeguarding, protecting—on all sides this is revealed to those whose eyes are opening. It gives the feeling of safety and an awareness of a master Mind that shelters all in His keeping. It is such experiences which give rise to the belief that nothing is ever lost, that death itself is but a new beginning. As Rupert Brooke expressed it :

“ Safe though all safety lost, safe where men fall,  
And if these poor limbs die safest of all.”

### GARDENING

Children do not enjoy gardening as such, in the sense of planning, and waiting hopefully for things to happen. They want activity and quick results. Their time sense is very rudimentary, especially in regard to the future which they cannot easily imagine. Seed beds are watched anxiously for a day or so, but are as a rule forgotten long before germination. Nevertheless, at about four years old children like to own a garden which they can dig, surround with shells or pebbles and know to be their own. One or two plants suffice and these

should for preference be provided near their flowering time. Pansies, lobelia, marigolds, that soon flower and make a gay show, a few hardy perennials such as michaelmas daisies and plants that flower and seed freely and come again and again like forget-me-not and nasturtium, are a good background for such a garden. The year-long experience of the big garden has its influence slowly and subconsciously, for children like to help in doing things there such as driving in stakes for tying up, watering, cutting off seed-pods "for next year." If the teacher can spare time to work in the garden while the children are there, her activities are very educative, even though the children do not always appear to notice what is happening.

#### THE GARDEN AS A SOURCE OF WONDER AND DELIGHT

It is not easy to estimate the extent of the garden's influence. A boy from a very rough home once met the superintendent of his former nursery school that he had attended three or four years previously. "Are you taking the children to the country again?" he asked. "Yes—we go off next month—do you remember when you came?" asked the superintendent, thinking of the rides on the donkey, the feeding of ducks and chickens, romps in the hay at the farm where the holiday was spent, and also one memorable day at the sea. "Gee, yes," he replied. . . . "Do you remember that butterfly?" "The butterfly?" echoed the superintendent with surprise. "Oh, Miss—you haven't forgotten that butterfly, have you? Don't you remember when it came on to the lavender and stuck its wings up together?—you do remember, don't you?" he asked eagerly and anxiously. Of course she remembered. A butterfly with wings poised on a bed of lavender in a cottage garden. This had remained vivid and clear in the mind of the slum child for many years.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR NATURE TABLES AND CORNERS

Nature tables and corners, aquaria, vivaria, are all valuable ways of supplementing the interests aroused by the garden and of providing wider knowledge and closer observation than would otherwise come to the children. These indoor aids can never take the place of the garden, but they afford a very valuable way of isolating plants and creatures and of giving opportunity for continuous observations of the life cycles. If they are to serve their purpose well they should reveal something of the beauty, the order and the rhythm of the outer world and so quicken the child's sensitive awareness and send him in search of the many wonderful things that are happening in the out-of-doors world. It is simple and practical to follow the rhythm of the seasons and to make the corner illustrative of the atmosphere and events of each season by the general arrangement as well as by the particular specimens included.

A low, fairly large table or wide shelf serves well if placed where children can have free access to it in a good light. In addition it is useful to have an out-of-reach shelf—for adults—not for children—on which specimens can be kept that are good to look at but not to touch—such as autumn berries. Many of these berries are poisonous to a greater or less extent and should be kept out of reach and so placed that berries which fall collect on the high shelf. This shelf can be a means of creating atmosphere with its bowls of bright flowers, its branches of budding twigs or green leaves, for things can be massed upon it in a way that is not suitable for the nature tables themselves. The vivarium, of which the cover should not be lifted lest creatures escape, should also be out of reach though low enough to be looked at.

Material for the nature tables, if added to week by week, a little at a time, is usually enjoyed more fully than

if great quantities are produced at one time. Whereas the out-of-reach shelf should be reserved for the teachers' care, children should be permitted and encouraged to care for the nature tables under supervision. They should realize that all things need careful and special handling, which the teacher is ready to show them. Obviously much of the value of the nature corner will be lost if it is permitted to become dirty, untidy or unattractive—with faded flowers or stale water in vases.

### WINTER

In winter the nature shelf and corners should represent sleep; bareness, inactivity—the period of “biding their time” as J. Arthur Thomson puts it. Bare twigs that later show green shoots, bulbs that also give signs of growth should be included with sleeping seeds, acorns, horse chestnuts, sycamore keys—these latter arranged in bowls of dead leaves by which they are half covered. The vivarium,<sup>1</sup> which must be kept in a cool place, can contain snails asleep. The Roman snail, which seals itself up effectively, as well as the Common *Helix*, should both have a place. A vivarium with sleeping frogs and toads can also be kept from the autumn. In the aquarium, goldfish and small carp carry on life much as usual, but it is possible to have a sleeping aquarium in which dragonfly and other larvæ are hidden in the soil, to emerge later. A collection of sleeping butterflies and moths—chrysalids—can be kept on large pieces of bark or in boxes lined with leaves.

### SPRING

The converting of a winter into a spring corner is best done gradually, in the same way as nature changes woods and hedgerows, bringing delight by the first blossoming.

<sup>1</sup> For directions for setting up aquaria and vivaria see C. von Wyss' *Living Creatures and Teachings of Nature Study*. (A. and C. Black.)

To the nucleus of budding twigs already in the corner and showing signs of life others can be added that soon produce catkins in the warmth of the room—such as elder, poplar, willow, hazel and birch. Flowers can be added as they appear. If they are grown in bowls every stage can be watched and appreciated. Ordinary daisy roots and coltsfoot are both easy to obtain and very attractive. Roots of primroses or garden polyanthus give gay colour. Growing bulbs, acorns in glasses, and many buds that open quickly, such as lilac, elm, poplar, as well as the ever popular horse chestnuts can all find a place. Flowers that open indoors like flowering currant (*Ribes*) and almond are ethereal in their delicacy. The chrysalids should be watched constantly as sooner or later each one gives up its treasure and the moment of emergence is an experience not to be missed. The aquarium beings to stir—more plants—more snails. . . .

#### SUMMER

This season of abundance is easily represented and nature tables can be constantly varied with a succession of lovely bloom. Many children are able to bring contributions from their home gardens and allotments. The corner also provides an excellent opportunity for collecting all the many different kinds of leaves—differing from one another in colour, texture, shape and size, and for examining the different kinds of stalks as well as buds and flowers. The aquarium and vivarium are alive and a vigilant watch should be kept for the emergence of the dragon-fly and for the protection of newts which want to leave the water. The tadpoles have now become frogs and must be on land. They can be removed to the vivarium, into which minute insects—easily found in a boggy swamp—have been placed, though they should soon be liberated. A wormery is also a summer interest. This is simple to make and easy to keep. A narrow

glass tank should be filled with layers of good rich soil, a small amount of chalky soil and then a lighter soil. Leaves can be placed on the surface and the whole tank covered with a dark cloth or any material that can be easily removed. The soil should be slightly moistened and large earthworms introduced. The burrows can be seen against the glass and the mixing of soil witnessed. The older children are usually very much interested in the sudden movement of the worms in their burrows which takes place when the dark cover is lifted and the light comes into the tank.

#### AUTUMN

"Season of mist and mellow fruitfulness," as Keats calls it, gives great scope. The mellow fruitfulness can at least be portrayed indoors by means of hips and haws on the high shelf, by other fruit and berries, vegetables and nuts. Branches of autumn leaves, gold red and brown should blaze from the high shelf and smaller quantities on the nature tables serve as a reminder of the splendour of the autumn world. There should also be some showing next year's buds.

Fungi are abundant and beautiful but so many are poisonous that it is not wise to include them on nature tables for very young children. Nor are frogs and toads, which if they were put into the vivarium must now be released from it to feed and grow fat before hibernating, very suitable companions for children. They feed only on living things and it is not suitable for such young children to watch them gobbling the worms that have to be provided for these creatures in captivity.

#### SOME ATTRACTIVE AND HARDY TREES AND SHRUBS FOR THE NURSERY SCHOOL GARDEN

Almond : *Prunus Amygdalis*. Early flowering.

Lilac : *Syringa Wilsoni*.

- Lilac : *Syringa alba grandiflora*.  
 Hawthorn : *Crataegus Oxyacantha* (white).  
               *Crataegus Coccinea plena* (red).  
 Broom : *Cytisus praecox* (primrose colour).  
               *Cytisus praecox alba* (white).  
 Buddleia : *variabilis magnifica* (attracts butterflies).  
               *globosa* (attracts butterflies).  
 Bush Honeysuckle : *Weigelia*.  
 Bride flower : *Philadelphus*.  
 Flowering Currant : *Ribes Atrosanguineum*.  
                           *Ribes Aureum*.  
 Guelder Rose : *Viburnum opulus sterile* (snow-balls).  
 Winter Sweet : *Chimonanthus fragrans*.  
 Dogwood : *Cornus alba*. Blood red stems (good near water.)  
*Prunus Pissardii*. Crimson foliage—also early flowering (January–February.)  
 Maple : *Acer palmatus sanguineum*. Scarlet foliage.  
               *Acer negundo variegata*. Variegated silvery foliage.  
 Siberian crab apple : *Pyrus baccata*. Lovely flowering. Persistent scarlet fruit.  
*Cotoneaster microphylla*. Scarlet persistent berries, evergreen foliage—does well against walls.  
*Berberis Darwinii*. Persistent fruits.  
*Berberis aquifolium*. Very hardy. Holly-like evergreen foliage. Orange flowers, plum-coloured fruits.  
*Forsythia*. Masses of golden flowers in Spring.  
*Ceanothus* (*Floribundus* is the hardiest.) Blue flowers in early Summer.)

## CLIMBERS

- Clematis : *Clematis Jackmani*.  
               *Clematis montana*.  
 Jasmine : *Jasminum officinale*. (Very fragrant.)  
               *Jasminum nudiflorum*.



Honeysuckle. *Lonicera belgia*.

Virginian Creeper. *Ampelopsis quinquefolia*.

*Ampelopsis Veitchii* (clinging.) (Colours well  
in Autumn.)

American Vine: *Vitis Coignetiae*.

*Polygonum baldschuanicum*. (Masses of white flowers.)

Rambler roses of varied sorts.

N.B.—Laburnum, Daphne Mezereum, and Privet should  
not be included as the fruits are poisonous.

Broom fruit and lupin seeds are also slightly poisonous  
but not dangerously so.

## CHAPTER XVII

### FIVE TO SEVEN YEARS OF AGE

IN the foregoing chapters some indication has been given of the way in which life in the nursery school is planned to stimulate and nurture all-round growth and development. Where this is successfully done, the child reaches the leaving age of five years, healthy, vigorous and well grown. He has manual dexterity and can use tools skilfully. Physically, he is well co-ordinated and agile. Mentally, he is very wide awake, full of curiosity which he endeavours to satisfy, partly by a flow of questions, to which he requires clear, informative replies, but chiefly by his own effort in experiment and investigation. He is very adventurous, has both initiative and enterprise, and is not easily daunted by difficulties, for he has learned to concentrate on self-chosen tasks with strength of will and self-discipline, until he has accomplished what he sets out to achieve. He is able to plan what he intends to do before commencing it, revealing thereby a budding capacity for abstract thinking, and he can imagine, judge and make decisions. Socially, he has learned to associate in a friendly way with others, not only other children but also adults who are not mother or near relative, whom he is willing to trust. He has, in fact, learned to play his part as a member of a community with give and take, which implies both warmth of emotion and a degree of restraint of it that is so essential for healthy adjustment. Unselfconsciously and with enthusiasm, he is able to join with others in play, in song, in acting, and in all the many activities that arise from his active and fertile imagination.

When he goes to the infant school, unless it is working on modern, progressive lines which continue the methods of the nursery school, this active "learning by living" comes to an abrupt end. No longer is he a member of a community sharing his interests with his companions, stimulating and being stimulated by them as they join in co-operative adventure. On the contrary much of the day must be spent in sedentary occupations, most of which are planned and controlled by the teacher. Few of the occupations bear much relationship to natural interest. The three R's, in which the child at first is only mildly interested (if at all), are given central place and the maximum of time. Opportunity to do the many things the child is burning to be active about is given a very small share of it. In many schools it is permitted only on Friday afternoons! Yet the child himself and his needs have not changed. He is still at a stage of development when he learns most successfully through activity, and very little by formal methods. His eagerness to play and use his hands in constructive activities is still keen, and in doing so he reveals a quickening intellectual interest and capacity for learning. Being more of a realist than in earlier years, with keener observation of things as they are, and more critical judgment of his efforts, he begins to measure; to study proportions and to examine his products with ever increasing desire for improvement. All such activities are educative in the fullest sense—not only because they are a natural way to approach the three R's, but especially as they are for the most part, carried out with other children, involving much discussion, planning and co-operation. The influence of community life in the formation of attitudes and character and in the shaping of personality cannot be sufficiently stressed. Yet such valuable education is reduced to the minimum or crowded out altogether when the child's activities are narrowed down to formal methods of learning to

read, write and do sums ; activities that have neither meaning nor purpose in themselves to children since, when approached in this way, they do not arise out of living experience.

Why should this sociable, self-active education cease when the child goes to the primary school ? Is not this custom a relic of long-discarded educational theory and belief that children must be taught and trained by adults, whereas it is known that given the right opportunity and suitable guidance they learn best by their own efforts in company with other children ? As has been shown in earlier chapters the impulse to think, to learn, to acquire skill and to use the mind in all the ways characteristic of man, arises spontaneously in every child growing normally. This impulse is a *driving force* impelling the child forward in adventure and achievements, including the mastery of reading, writing and number when interest in these activities awakens. It is the teachers' task to nurture and aid this spontaneous energy, to give opportunity and outlet, encouragement and guidance and having cleared the way in this manner to give the child a clear field. Unsatisfactory as it is to the child to enter a formal infant school from a well-run nursery school, it is perhaps more disastrous to one making his first entry to education without this previous experience. Such a child misses the educative advantage of varied play in a social setting and is therefore seldom as developed and as "work mature" as one who has spent three years in a nursery school. If therefore he could find in the infant department an opportunity for play and experiment and for being self-active in the manner previously described, this would compensate to some extent for experience missed at an earlier age. Five-year-olds entering a progressive infant school without having been in a nursery school often show their need for these earlier play activities. It is no uncommon thing for them to play in ways

normally associated with three- and four-year-olds and to pass on to activities more suitable to their age only when they have satisfied themselves at the earlier level of performance. In schools where methods are formal or repressive, this opportunity is denied and children in consequence lose something essential to their harmonious development.

For many years there has been a growing conviction that this break of method at five is unsatisfactory, and that education should continue until seven or eight years of age and in the junior school on the same principles as are found in the nursery school. There seems to be no justification for maintaining two distinct types of school for children's first five years of education—between two and seven years of age—and it is believed that it would be better, from every point of view, for children to experience the all-round education of the nursery school throughout the growing years of early childhood.

There is considerable evidence in support of the value of such continuity, for teachers in several infant schools and in some junior schools have been carrying on the experiment of conducting their schools on the principle of "learning by living." The results of these experiments are most encouraging. Teachers have witnessed a complete change in children's attitude towards learning, once the newer methods were introduced. What is equally encouraging, there has been a quickening of interest and enthusiasm not only on the part of the children, but also in the teachers as they abandoned the old-time custom of teaching a prescribed amount of this or that daily, and instead followed the children wherever they went, and entered fully into their creative living and learning. In her stimulating little book,<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Taylor describes the change that came over her class when the newer active methods were introduced in these stirring words :

<sup>1</sup> *Experiments with a Backward Class*. (Methuen.)

"Everyone had, in fact, flung off the garment of ennui and indifference and were swimming blithely in a boisterous sea of purposeful activity." Similar discoveries had been made by all who have ventured courageously and planned intelligently for children's spontaneous interests. Many teachers have been particularly impressed by the extent of children's intelligence, their thirst for information and vivid memory when information is given in response to felt need and desire, and also the rapidity with which they have learned and acquired skill, including mastery of the three R's when these skills were attacked at the child's own time. Such experiments as have been made have revealed the many advantages of this method of learning, as well as some of the difficulties in connection with it that still await solution. They have, in fact, presented a serious argument for the creation of a new type of school for children between the ages of two and seven plus. Such a school would be growth centred and would provide progressively for the changing developmental needs and interests of growing children. In it there would be steady progress from the informal day of the two-year-old with its simple play, meals and sleep, to the more complex occupations of the seven-year-old. Throughout, the child would learn by actual experiment, which he would himself initiate and direct, helped and encouraged by teachers. Like the nursery school, it would be a school planned for a way of living, which would be educative in all places: rooms, hall, playground and garden.

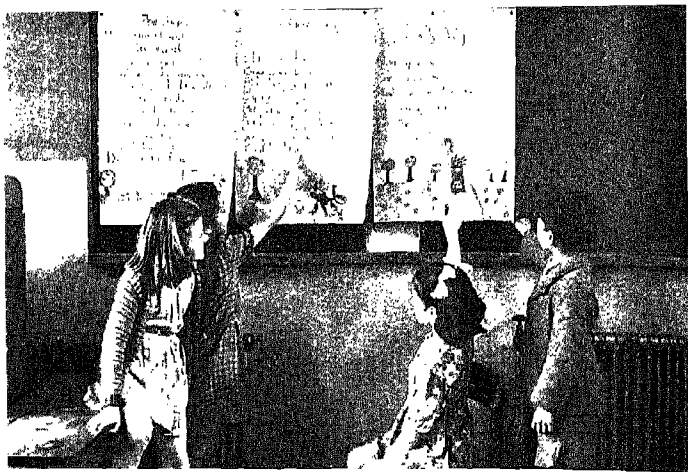
In considering the planning of this school, the early stages would, of course, follow the pattern built up by the good nursery school. From the age of five onwards, many revolutionary changes would have to be made from the traditional infant school "set-up." As already suggested, it should be a place for full living—not narrow learning—with rooms for active occupations (carpentry, modelling, etc.), as well as the more sedentary work such



*Seven-year-olds make toys for the nursery department*

*The toys are displayed with pride*





*Eight-year-olds discuss their own poetry*

*Children write and produce a play*





as looking at books and reading, writing, hearing stories, poetry, music, and for meals. The régime of the school would be concerned with safeguarding and nurturing the growth of every individual child. First consideration would be given to physical health. Growth is very rapid between five and seven plus. It is the second "springing up" period which brings with it susceptibility to acute infections such as whooping-cough, measles, chicken-pox, all of which can, and often do, seriously undermine health. Because of this danger, as well as for educational reasons, children should not be congregated in large numbers in their classes. The buildings should be of an open-air type, and children should spend most of the day in active pursuits out of doors. The traditional infant school, in which children spend most of the day indoors in sedentary occupations with only occasional breaks for physical education or play-time, is totally unsuitable at this age. However, if, until new buildings become possible, work has to be carried on indoors, much can be done to keep rooms fresh and airy. The teacher should regard it of paramount importance to see to this and should so accustom herself to fresh air that she would quickly detect any tendency to stuffiness.

The introduction of nourishing meals and milk, now compulsory under the 1944 Act, is a wise and far-seeing provision, and should do much to raise standards of health and intelligence. It should also have a great influence on home standards where these are in need of being raised. It is very much hoped that teachers will never let "dinner at school" descend to a mere feeding-time, but will seize the opportunity it offers for training in good eating habits and liking for suitable food, as well as for social conduct. It is doubtful if there is any single feature in the nursery school that has done more to raise living standards in the home than the serving of meals and the cultivation of attitudes and habits that are

associated with them. The importance of this training must not be disregarded with the older children. They are becoming more conscious of behaviour, of social conduct, and are more actively responsive to the influence of daintily set tables and the social aspect of the meal, such as serving one another and good conversation. In resisting the many "extraneous" duties that in recent years have been imposed on teachers, that take time and energy which should be given to children's education, no infant teacher will, it is hoped, classify dinner-time as "extraneous." Good social and hygiene training is as important as learning to write, and it is the teacher's job to give it.

The meal, however, is only one aspect of the important training in social and hygienic attitude that falls to the teacher of these older children. Toilet training, so well commenced in nursery schools, must be carried on as it is possible to do in the newly-built infant schools, with their spacious handwashing rooms with hot and cold water, ample supply of clean towels, and indoor sanitation. Time should be made available every day for training children in hygienic habits and in arousing a social conscience regarding the care of these conveniences which others must share, however inadequate they may be. Children who have benefited from this training in their Nursery years experience a disturbing shock when they find these matters disregarded at school, and are in danger of associating cleanliness of person and of places as something babyish to be outgrown and forgotten. The day of having W.C.s across the playground where it is not easy to give training or supervision, and of dingy cloakrooms without soap or clean towel is past. Such out-of-date arrangements should be speedily replaced. It is useless to plan for a really democratic society, and at the same time to disregard this most fundamental aspect of education. It is the teachers

who must see that this training is given to every child. To achieve this successfully calls for smaller classes, and also the need for augmenting the staffing by the appointment of "helpers," as in the nursery school, for at least the children under six years of age.

Turning from such matters as physical care and health training to other aspects of development, it would seem wise to continue methods of learning by means of vital experience and activity. The child of five or six is as eager for movement, experiment and investigation as the four-year-old, and he learns best in this way. The appearance of the progressive infant school is not of neat rows of still and silent children, but is not unlike a beehive in which there is incessant going and coming against a background of buzzing chatter as they plan and discuss their occupations. Perhaps a workshop would be a better comparison, for children are to be seen engaged in all manner of pursuits—hammering, sawing, painting, cutting up materials, building, sewing, playing at shops and hospitals, at houses and railways, writing, calculating, and making every kind of property with which to assist the reality of their occupation. "A boisterous sea of purposeful activity." What a true picture this phrase gives. Of the value of such purposeful activity much can be said, and has been said so well and so fully that the student cannot do better than study the books on the subject listed in the bibliography. In these books details are given as to how to set about developing education on these lines, what to use and when and how to use it. From such books, too, it is possible to discover how much more children learn by these activity methods than from the more formal methods; how much they develop in leadership, initiative and in self-reliance; in capacity to carry a plan through to its completion, disciplining themselves as their work demands. How skilful and agile they become in move-

ment and in manipulation and how eagerly they seek information and guidance, as though hungry for knowledge and understanding! Perhaps the most significant result of these methods is the relationship that springs up between children and their teachers, and with other children. This building up of personal relationships is of inestimable value in the shaping of emotional stability, and comes about very naturally and easily in an active régime that throws people together in all kinds of unexpected, and informal situations. By the teacher's participation in everything that each child does, there grows up a sense of comradeship between teacher and child that draws them near together. The child who feels secure in the affectionate regard and active interest of the teacher becomes more confident, more adventurous, in all he does. With this happy relationship of trust and fellowship, he more readily accepts such suggestions and guidance as have to be given from time to time, and he turns to the adult spontaneously for help, knowing she will not fail him. It is an association that is stimulating to the child both emotionally and intellectually, and makes for sound educational influence which long outlasts school days.

Being brought into active experience with other children is also of the greatest value. The importance of social development has been discussed in an earlier chapter in general terms and also in relation to younger children. It is of particular significance at the age now under discussion, when children begin to form more or less permanent groups for their play and to have special friends. For them it is essential for school to be a democratic community in which they can play their part. In giving it their loyalty and allegiance, they begin to change from the egocentricity of early childhood into socialized persons. Children can be seen in their groups planning projects that continue day after day, overflowing

from classroom to corridors and main hall, and involving in good team work the co-operation of many children, each one with his own special contribution to make.

The fact that much of the day is spent in activities of the children's own choosing, does not remove the necessity for, nor the enjoyment of, collective activities planned by the teacher for the whole class. Not only do children delight in such work if not overdone, but there are many activities that cannot conveniently be arranged in other ways. Thus during each week there should be much music—singing, rhythemics, dancing and listening to music. There should be stories told or read aloud and lengthened, as children can sustain interest for many days, until long stories can be chosen. There will be narratives of many kinds—adventure, animal, children of other lands, and the traditional stories that never grow old. Poetry, too, should be read—the same poems read again and again till children join in bit by bit and then find they know them by heart. There should be acting and miming, gardening and pet-keeping, and, of course, games and physical education.

There are teachers who, though attracted by these newer methods, are, nevertheless, afraid to leave the traditional set time-table and formal teaching lest, as a consequence, the children do not make the progress in the three R's that is required of them. Miss D. E. M. Gardner's impartial investigations<sup>1</sup> should allay such fears. For though it is true that in adopting these methods children do not, as a rule, take much interest in the three R's at as early an age as they are habitually taught, it is, nevertheless, true that by seven plus they are as accomplished, and in many cases much more proficient, in them than is usual. What is of greater significance is the fact that the child is *really interested* in these skills which, approached when they need them, have

<sup>1</sup> *Testing Results in the Infant School.* (Methuen.)

meaning and purpose. This is not always true of children who have been kept laboriously at these subjects from the age of school entry when, as has been shown, there is little real interest in them. Writing is a difficult skill to acquire, and before it can be properly mastered the child must build up an eye-brain-hand co-ordination that enables him to copy what he sees. Before this is established, letters are frequently written upside down or backwards, and without proportion one to the other. Dr. Montessori demonstrated how in her schools (where this co-ordination was built up by a carefully planned régime of manipulation and also by deliberately cultivated sensory discrimination), children who "exploded into writing," as she claimed was general, wrote with well-formed letters from the first attempt. Dr. Montessori provided didactic material to be used in a very precise way to ensure this, which few teachers would willingly require of children to-day. But it is possible, without accepting her actual method, to follow the principle on which it was based—which bears close relationship to children's developmental capacity. The development of this sensory muscular co-ordination can be achieved by means of the varied occupations and play that characterize the spontaneous activity of children when adequate play material is available. If, therefore, by postponing the time for beginning writing and letting children develop themselves, the actual accomplishment is rendered both better and easier at a later age, and if there is also at this later age a keen desire for achievement because writing has meaning for the child—surely the delay is worth risking?

Reading, too, requires preparation if it is to proceed smoothly and bring with it the joy with which it should always be associated. For this accomplishment, as for writing, trained perception is needed if the child is to distinguish between letters that look somewhat similar,

such as b and d, m and n, c and e, or that sound much the same, except where hearing is acute, such as b and p, t and c. Another essential pre-requisite of intelligent reading is the possession of a good vocabulary and learning to speak well and fluently should precede the study of the written word. How much easier all reading is to the reader who is conversant with the words read. Then reading is full of meaning and of interest from the beginning. Nothing leads more rapidly to keen observation and to the formation of a good vocabulary than the adventurous and joyous form of education described, in which children examine, experiment and play with many things and also talk much with teachers and one another, and are ever asking for new words with which to describe the activities in which they are so eagerly engaged or anxious to pursue. The old standard by which a child's progress was rated by ability to read "Reader" 1, 2 or 3, must give place to a more intelligent assessment. The earliest stage of reading must, of course, be closely related to daily experiences or to action—reading and "doing." By the time children are able to read books, they should do so for the story contained. Thus approached, reading is always an intelligent activity and full of meaning to the child, who recognizes books as a magic key opening up a wondrous world. Book corners should be a feature of every infants' room (unless there are rooms specially reserved for reading). Here there should be publications suitable for all stages of learning, including good picture books and volumes that are a joy to handle, and rich in content. A good way to begin such a corner is, when "requisitioning," to ask for, say, three copies each of sixteen different "Readers" or story books, instead of forty-eight "Readers" No. 1, 2 or 3. To this nucleus of sixteen different books, other single volumes can be added gradually. The teacher can lend from her own stock

(which every infants' teacher should possess), when children have learned to handle books with care—or as a means of giving this training. Also she should encourage children to lend books which many of them have at home. In this way, real interest in books can be built up.

Number should be very practical in its early stages, counting, measuring, weighing, calculating "change" in shopping games, and should be, like writing, related to the activities in which the children are engaged. Home-made apparatus that can be so related is best in the early stage in all work in all three R's, but as children evoke interest in these skills, as soon happens, there is much useful material to be purchased for practice work.

The question as to whether it is better to keep the children under five in a separate school is one with much to be said for it. If a combined school is planned to cover the whole age range of two to seven plus, it will be necessary to protect the younger children from the disturbing and harmful effect of large numbers—and also to protect the older children from having their activities hampered by the presence of the slow-moving three- or four-year-old. The playrooms of the "under-fives" should be self-contained and adjoin both their lavatories and playgrounds, as has been discussed earlier, and these quarters should be so situated that they are not overrun by the older children who are too boisterous and quick-moving for the little ones. This does not mean that there should be no coming or going between children of different ages. On the contrary, the educational significance of these contacts is one of the valuable features of the school envisaged. It is so good for older children to visit younger brothers, sisters or friends, and for family groups to play together and gives them a keen sense of responsibility towards other members of the community. But it is clear that these visits need to be properly con-



trolled and limited. The needs of each age group are so different that their activities can only be of full value if carried on in an appropriate setting and with play material suited to their age. Nevertheless, each day would provide some opportunity for children of different ages to meet and enjoy one another, and for the whole school to form a community in which life would be for everyone, teachers and children alike, a joyous enterprise, to which they can give themselves wholeheartedly. But whether children spend these first five years of schooling in one school—or in two—it is firmly believed that the methods adopted in both should be similar so that children can progress in their education as naturally as they grow, from the interests and pursuits of the two-year-old to the ventures and learning of the seven-year-old. Is this a dream or is there not very real hope that the teachers of to-morrow will be inspired by what pioneers like Miss Boyce and others have already achieved, and will not rest until every infant school has “come alive”; until all have broken with restrictive and deadening routine, repressive formalism and rigid timetables, and have become real worlds—in which children can live in the full use of all their powers of head, heart and hand? When this has been achieved, every child will be enabled to approach boyhood and youth as well do the requirements of junior and secondary school with stability, strength and intelligence.

MATERIAL OF ALL KINDS FOR CARRYING ON PROJECTS  
AND FREE PLAY WITH FIVE- TO SEVEN-YEAR-OLDS

*Paper:* Kitchen or unprinted newspaper. Crêpe paper. Tissue paper. Mounting paper—large and small sheets, different colours, gummed and ungummed coloured paper; big sheets, squares and assorted shapes.

*Cardboard*: Thick and thin, white and coloured; corrugated.

*Paints*: Powder colour. Hogs-hair brushes, all sizes.

*Crayons*: Ordinary; thick, waxed for younger children.

*Pencils*: Ordinary. Coloured. Short, thick, for younger children. Some carpenter's pencils.

*Scissors, paste, glue.*

*Modelling materials*: Clay, boards or trays or covers for tables. Tools. Children's aprons. Plasticine in different colours. Dough—sweepings from bakery if obtainable.

*House-play*: (a) Wendy house or screens or clothes-horses, or large blocks or timber for making houses. Equipment for use in them; furniture, crockery, washing, baking and cleaning sets; dolls. (b) Doll's house—furnished for younger children. Materials with which to furnish it.

*Shops*: Materials (tables, desks or boxes) for making them, and for furnishing them. Balances, scales and weights, capacity measures, yardsticks, tape-measures, clocks with movable hands, cardboard coins.

*Bricks*: Various sizes and shapes. Boxes, odd pieces of wood, small planks, bobbins and spools.

*Woodwork*: Bench (or box or old table), wood, hammers, saws (hacksaws and tenonsaws), files, pliers, nails with large heads, sandpaper.

*Oddments box*: Odd pieces of wood and cardboard boxes of all shapes and sizes; bobbins, spools, corks, tops of jars and bottles, etc.

*Number games*, e.g. dominoes, lotto, quoits, bagatelle, skil-pail; shopping and banking games, and any others.

Sets of houses, cars, traffic signals, transport sets, train sets, farm sets—for use with bricks or making models.

*Books* : Story and poetry for children's use. Books dealing with everyday things, e.g. books of trains, aeroplanes, farms ; story books of houses, clothes, etc. Books for reference : to find out how things work ; to find out how to make things. Materials for making own books, individual and groups.

*Book corners* (see Bibliographies).

*Physical education apparatus* : Balls, varying sizes, including big rubber ones ; hoops, bats, ropes, jumping stands, bean bags, balance bars, wall bars, ladders, ropes for climbing, individual mats, grooved skittles, canes (varying lengths), bands.



## APPENDIX

### OBSERVATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN

It is not intended in this appendix to present a comprehensive scheme for detailed observation, nor for assessing the standard of behaviour at different ages. Its purpose is to provide a form sufficiently brief to be practical for regular use in nursery schools and classes, yet comprehensive enough to enable the teacher to watch the growth of each child. However busy, her first responsibility is to foster the all-round growth of every child, and this is possible only by careful observation of every aspect of behaviour and noting its trend and progress.

The extent to which the child functions soundly—that is to say, uses his capacity to the full, depends partly on his attitude to himself and partly on the opportunity afforded by his environment. When he is functioning fully he will be alert and happy, will make effort, develop in intelligence, resourcefulness, independence, sociability and general stability. The nature of the child's play and his general behaviour are indicative of growth trends, and observations recorded over a period of time should enable the teacher to know if these trends are satisfactory. She should then be aware whether the child needs the help that she can give by personal approach, or whether a modification of the environment is desirable. She should also be able to realize when the help of a specialist must be sought.

It is vital to note the child's readiness to respond to the demands of reality or his tendency to escape into a world of his own. When development is normal fantasy play and egocentric interests should be gradually replaced by an increasing interest in reality and sociability.

It is suggested that for children under four years of age, entries be made each month. For children over that age, every three months should suffice. The method of recording suggested has been devised to avoid the necessity for much writing and to enable the teacher to see progress at a glance.

Some guidance is necessary as to the method of recording observations on the form attached. Functioning in which the child should gradually become successful should be marked —, — +, or + according as whether the child fails, is partially successful or is completely successful.

For example :

	Date and mark	Date and mark	Date and mark
Bladder control	Oct. 25 —	Nov. 23 — +	Dec. 21 +

Such items are given the index figure (1) on accompanying form. Progress is shown by the appearance of + mark.

There are other items in which development consists not in success or failure but in the emergence of capacity or control—as for instance when the child begins to make sustained effort. An example of this can be taken for the emotional record.

	Date and mark	Date and mark	Date and mark
Attitude towards difficulties	Oct. 25 +	Nov. 23	Dec. 23
avoidance			
protest			
making of effort		+	+

These matters are given the index figure (2). The list is so arranged that progress is shown by the increase of + at the end of the list.

There is a third group of items that should tend to disappear with healthy development. When present they should be marked +. Progress is shown by the

disappearance of the + sign. They are given the index mark (3). For example :

	Date and mark	Date and mark	Date and mark
	Oct. 25	Nov. 23	Dec. 21
Feeding difficulties	+	+	

Certain items classified as intellectual activity gradually become constant. When established they should be marked +. Progress is shown by the succession of + marks. These items are given the index mark (4).

## I

## GENERAL

Name of child  
Date of Birth  
Sex  
Place in Family  
Home Conditions  
Date of entry to school.

## HEALTH RECORD

If age of teething normal  
If age of walking normal  
Illnesses in infancy  
Present health and nutrition  
Any physical peculiarities or defects.

---

The "Lillian de Lissa" Nursery Record Sheets, printed on stout ledger paper, size 13" x 8", punched for insertion in file.

Teacher's Ring File for "Lillian de Lissa" Record Sheets. Strongly bound file with high-grade two-ring mechanism, including special instructions for maintenance of Record Sheets.

Student's Wallet, for holding Nursery Record Sheets, together with directions for maintenance of Record Sheets.

Published by Philip & Tacey, Ltd., 69-79 Fulham High Street, London, S.W.6.

## II

## PHYSIOLOGICAL FUNCTIONING

Progress  
recorded

Dates and Marks

- |                           |    |
|---------------------------|----|
| (1) Bladder control       | .. |
| (1) Bowel control         | .. |
| (3) Constipation          | .. |
| (3) Feeding difficulties  | .. |
| (3) Sleeping difficulties | .. |
| (3) Listlessness          | .. |
| (3) Specific Symptoms     | .. |
| c.g. Catarrhal condition  | .. |
| Asthma, etc               | .. |
| etc.                      |    |
| etc.                      |    |

## MUSCULAR CONTROL AND

- |               |    |
|---------------|----|
| BALANCE       |    |
| (1) Walking   | .. |
| (1) Running   | .. |
| (1) Skipping  | .. |
| (1) Hopping   | .. |
| (1) Climbing  | .. |
| (1) Balancing | .. |
| etc.          |    |
| etc.          |    |

## SKILL AND CO-ORDINATION

- |                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| (1) Turning taps               | .. |
| (1) Use of spoon               | .. |
| (1) Opening doors              | .. |
| (1) Putting on shoes           | .. |
| (1) Putting on coat or overall | .. |
| etc.                           |    |
| etc.                           |    |
| etc.                           |    |



## III

## INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY

Particular material or situation	Dates and Marks	Progress recorded
<div>(4) Experiments with raw or crude material</div> <div>(4) Experiments with Suggestive material, objects in the environment or new situations</div> <div>(4) Ability to express an idea in play ; to carry out a self-made plan ; to make recognizable things, i.e., the beginning of work</div> <div>(4) Sustained attention and increasing effort</div> <div>(4) Memory of previous experiences</div> <div>(4) Increasing use of language ; length of sentence ; sustaining conversation</div> <div>(4) Learning with interest e.g., use of didactic apparatus for numbers, reading, etc. etc. etc.</div>		

## IV

## EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOUR

	Dates and Marks	Progress recorded
(2) General Mood	Depressed Confident	
(2) General Behaviour	Dreamy Alert	
(2) Response to Difficulties—i.e., intellectual problems, frustration, accidents	Avoidance Protest Making effort	
(2) Relative amount of imaginative play	Preponderance or absence : Interspersed with reality play having intellectual interest	
(2) Specific Symptoms	Thumb sucking Stammering Failure to talk Enuresis etc. etc. etc.	

V

## SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Progress  
recorded

Dates and Marks

- 
- (2) *Social behaviour with Adults* ..  
 Aloofness—avoidance or shyness ..  
 Dependence .. ..  
 Defiance or hostility .. ..  
 Response to suggestions or requests .. ..  
 Making spontaneous offers of help etc. .. ..  
 etc. .. ..
- (2) *Social behaviour with Children* ..  
 Plays alone .. ..  
 { Makes tentative approach or imitates others .. ..  
 Plays as an individual near others  
 Responds to advances of others  
 { Makes advances with a co-operative spirit .. ..  
 Has a special friend(s) .. ..
-

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